



**FOR THE FIRST TIME IN KUWAIT**  
you can now activate your profile  
using Kuwait Mobile ID

Verify your profile on our app  
**with Kuwait Mobile ID**  
**and send money in minutes.**

Kuwait Mobile ID  
هويتي



Western  
Union



westernunion.com

أمان  
aman

صيرفة  
Exchange



**4** Kuwait's efforts to empower women admired: UN official



**7** India parliament votes to scrap farm reform laws



**14** Man United appoint Ralf Rangnick as interim boss



## New COVID Omicron poses 'very high' risk

### Australia halts border reopening; WHO warns on new variant



**KUWAIT:** Kuwaitis and expats arrive at the Kuwait International Airport in this file photo. Kuwait has banned commercial flights from nine African nations over the new COVID-19 variant Omicron. The countries are South Africa, where the new variant originated, in addition to Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zambia and Malawi. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

GENEVA: The World Health Organization warned yesterday the new COVID-19 Omicron variant poses a "very high" risk globally, despite uncertainties about the danger and contagion levels of the new strain. The UN health agency said the COVID strain first discovered in southern Africa was a "highly divergent variant with a high number of mutations... some of which are concerning and may be associated with immune escape potential and higher transmissibility."

"The likelihood of potential further spread of Omicron at the global level is high," WHO cautioned in a technical note. Till date, no deaths connected with the Omicron variant have been reported, it added. But even if the new variant does not prove more dangerous or deadly than previous ones, if it spreads more easily it will spark more cases and more pressure on health systems, and thus more deaths, the organization said.

"If another major surge of COVID-19 takes place driven by Omicron, consequences may be severe," it said, concluding that "the overall global risk related to the new VOC (variant of concern) Omicron is assessed as very high." WHO said countries should

enhance their surveillance to try to get a clear overview of where and how fast it is spreading. It also urged accelerated vaccination against COVID, especially among vulnerable populations who have yet to receive any jobs.

But it has cautioned against imposing travel bans, fearing that blocking travel from countries where new variants are first spotted could be unfair and dissuade surveillance. "With the Omicron variant now detected in several regions of the world, putting in place travel bans that target Africa attacks global solidarity," said WHO regional director Matshidiso Moeti. A growing list of countries have already imposed travel restrictions on southern Africa, including Britain, Indonesia, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United States.

Meanwhile, Australia yesterday halted a plan to relax border restrictions imposed last year to fight the COVID pandemic, as a new variant sweeping the world prompted the WHO to warn of potential "severe" consequences. Countries across the world have reacted to the Omicron strain, first identified in southern Africa, by slamming their borders shut

Continued on Page 2

### Iran nuclear talks restart

VIENNA: Fresh talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers restarted yesterday, with the EU chair saying he felt "extremely positive" while admitting that "difficult issues" have yet to be tackled. The talks in Vienna are the first since Iran paused them in June after the election of ultraconservative new President Ebrahim Raisi. Diplomats at the time had said they were "close" to an agreement.

Iran ignored appeals from Western countries to restart the talks for several months, all the while strengthening the capabilities of its nuclear program. In August, Raisi said Iran was again open to talks. Yesterday's meeting started just after 3 pm (1400 GMT) in the Palais Coburg hotel where the 2015 agreement - known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) - was clinched, and lasted a little more than two hours.

Along with Iran, diplomats from Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia are attending. Enrique Mora, the EU official chairing the talks, said there was "a sense of urgency in bringing the JCPOA back to life" and added that he felt "extremely positive". However, he admitted that "there are still difficult issues ahead". The United States is taking part in the talks indirectly and has said that Iran's recent actions do not "augur well" for the prospects of reviving the deal.

Iran's foreign ministry said in a statement that yesterday's meeting had taken place in a "professional and serious atmosphere". The head of Iran's delegation Ali Bagheri had "underlined the necessity to make sanctions lifting an absolute priority for the talks", it said.

The JCPOA offered a lifting of some of the array of economic sanctions Iran had been under in return for strict curbs on its nuclear program. But the deal started to unravel in 2018 when then-US president Donald Trump pulled out and began reinstating sanctions on Iran. Ordinary Iranians are hoping the talks may lead to some of those crippling sanctions being lifted. Unemployed Tehran resident Davoud Lotfinia told AFP: "The sanctions probably haven't affected the authorities, but the purchasing power of ordinary people is diminishing every day."

Continued on Page 2

### Former MP Muslim returns from exile to a big reception

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Leading opposition figure and former MP Faisal Al-Muslim yesterday returned to Kuwait after three and a half years in exile after an Amiri pardon was issued following sessions of a national dialogue. Hundreds of supporters including several current and former lawmakers received Muslim at the Airport and at his Diwaniya in Kheitan despite a four-hour delay in the Kuwait Airways flight due to a massive storm that hit Istanbul just before the scheduled takeoff.

Muslim is the last former opposition MP to return from exile. In the past 10 days, five other former opposition MPs and four activists returned to the country. Only one activist, Abdulaziz Al-Jarallah, has not returned because he is involved in other court cases. HH the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah earlier this month pardoned the 11 opposition MPs and activists from years of jail terms passed by the top court after convicting them of storming the Assembly building following an anti-corruption protest in November 2011.

Continued on Page 2



**KUWAIT:** Hundreds of supporters including several current and former lawmakers received a leading opposition figure and former MP Faisal Al-Muslim at the Airport and at his Diwaniya in Kheitan yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

### Club WCup to be held in UAE in February

LAUSANNE: The FIFA Club World Cup, initially set to be held in Japan in December, will now be held in the United Arab Emirates in February, world football's governing body announced today. The Club World Cup will run from February 3-12, featuring eight matches between the champions of the six continental confederations along with the top team in the host nation.

The competition draw will be held in Zurich later today. Teams include Champions League winners Chelsea,

Copa Libertadores champions Palmeiras of Brazil, Mexican club Monterrey and Al-Ahly of Egypt. Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia, Emirati club Al Jazira and Auckland complete the line up. Japan pulled out as host because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Club World Cup is usually played in December, but this is the second successive year in which it has been delayed - the 2020 edition in Qatar was played in February this year. Bayern Munich won the most recent edition of the Club World Cup, which has been held in the UAE on four previous occasions, most recently in 2018 when Real Madrid were the winners. A lucrative, revamped 24-team Club World Cup, including eight sides from Europe, was due to be played in China this year before the pandemic put that project on hold. — AFP



**DUBAI:** A traditional band performs next to a monument at Dubai Expo 2020 - celebrating the upcoming United Arab Emirates' 50th anniversary which falls on December 2. — AFP

### Wild winds kill four in Turkey

ISTANBUL: Fierce winds in Turkey killed four people in Istanbul in storms which closed the busy and

strategically important Bosphorus strait to all shipping yesterday. Turkey's directorate general of coastal safety tweeted that the strait - the only maritime connection between the Mediterranean and Black seas - was closed to ships from both directions from 1130 GMT.

Winds reaching 129 kilometers per hour killed four people including a foreign national, and injured 19 people in Istanbul, the provincial authorities said

in a statement. One of the victims was a woman who died after a roof fell on her as she was walking in Esenyurt district on the European side of Istanbul, the private DHA news agency reported. Planes landing in Istanbul were redirected to alternative airports in Turkey. The wild weather also damaged buildings and infrastructure in Istanbul and the surrounding area. — AFP

## Local

# Crown Prince receives invitation to attend Jeddah's F1 Grand Prix



KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a written letter from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, delivered by Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud. — KUNA photos



His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah meets Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud.

KUWAIT: His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received yesterday a written letter from Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al-

Saud concerning ties and ways to enhance them. The letter touched on recent regional and international developments, and also included an invitation to attend the Formula 1 Grand Prix to be

held in Jeddah on December 5, 2021. Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khaled Al-Saud handed the letter to His Highness the Crown Prince during a reception at

Bayan Palace. Head of His Highness the Crown Prince's Diwan Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and other officials were present at the reception. — KUNA



KUWAIT: Hundreds of supporters including several current and former lawmakers received a leading opposition figure and former MP Faisal Al-Muslim at his Diwaniya in Kheitan yesterday. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



## Former MP Muslim returns...

Continued from Page 1

Before boarding the plane in Istanbul, Muslim

## Iran nuclear talks restart...

Continued from Page 1

The EU's Mora said that there was an "urgency in putting an end to the suffering of the Iranian people". The year after Trump's move, Iran retaliated by starting to exceed the limits on its nuclear activity laid down in the deal. In recent months, it has started enriching uranium to unprecedented levels and has also restricted the activities of inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the UN watchdog charged with monitoring Iran's nuclear facilities.

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi said "no progress" was made on issues he raised during a visit to Tehran last week. Mora said yesterday that getting Iran's nuclear program under "transparent monitoring" was a matter of "urgency". A working group on lifting sanctions would meet today, Mora said, with a group focusing on nuclear-related commitments meeting the following day.

## New COVID Omicron...

Continued from Page 1

despite the variant having already reached Europe, Asia and North America.

Australia, which has already confirmed five cases of Omicron, was set to relax restrictions on skilled workers and students from tomorrow in a boon to industries suffering labor shortages under one of the world's toughest border regimes. But Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced a two-week delay on the plan to allow Australia to gather information on the new variant, following announcements from Japan and Zionist entity of bans on foreign travelers.

Many governments, particularly in western Europe, are already struggling with rapid rises in cases and have reintroduced mandatory mask-wearing, social-distancing measures, curfews or lockdowns-leaving high street businesses fearing another grim Christmas. Health ministers from the G7 group of the world's richest nations

thanked the Kuwaiti people, the Amir and all those who contributed to the pardon. People gathered outside Sheikh Saad Airport, where Muslim was taken from terminal T4, and exploded in joy when he emerged from the terminal. He knelt down and kissed the ground immediately after coming out of the plane. At Muslim's Diwaniya, there was a display of fireworks as people performed national and folkloric dances in celebration of his return.

"Iran is acting like the United States is going to blink first but... pressure is a double-edged sword," Kelsey Davenport, an expert with the Arms Control Association, told journalists last week. "If there are gaps in the IAEA's monitoring, it will drive the speculation that Iran has engaged in illicit activity, that it has a covert program, whether there's evidence to that or not," Davenport said, which could in turn "undermine the prospects for sustaining the deal".

In London, top Zionist diplomat Yair Lapid was scheduled to meet British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris today. Lapid also met his British counterpart Liz Truss, and before the meeting the pair published an article in the Daily Telegraph newspaper saying they would "work night and day to prevent the Iranian regime from ever becoming a nuclear power".

British foreign minister Liz Truss added in a statement that the UK wanted "Iran to agree to the original JCPOA" but warned that if the talks "don't work, all options are on the table". Zionist Prime Minister Naftali Bennett urged the country's allies "to not give into Iran's nuclear blackmail", adding: "Such a murderous regime should not be rewarded." — AFP

are set to meet later to discuss the new strain, with European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen warning that the world was in a "race against time".

The first confirmed case of the Omicron variant was in South Africa on November 9, with infections spreading rapidly in the country-although no deaths have yet been reported, according to the WHO. It warned however that "if another major surge of COVID-19 takes place driven by Omicron, consequences may be severe." Scientists in South Africa flagged the new strain last Thursday, prompting several European countries to quickly ban flights from the region.

That irritated South African officials who said they were being "punished" for identifying a strain that has now been detected everywhere from the Netherlands to the UK, Canada to Hong Kong. The WHO's Africa branch said barring travelers from the continent "attacks global solidarity", and Malawi's President Lazarus Chakwera accused Western countries of "Afrophobia".

Underlining the difficulties of containing the spread, Austria and Scotland, which both have flight bans in place from several African countries, confirmed their first cases of Omicron yesterday. Nevertheless, Japan joined a growing list of countries reimposing tough border controls, barring all new foreign arrivals. — AFP

## COVID to cost global tourism \$2.0 trillion

MADRID: The coronavirus pandemic will cost the global tourism sector \$2.0 trillion in lost revenue in 2021, the UN's tourism body said yesterday, calling the sector's recovery "fragile" and "slow". The forecast from the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization comes as Europe is grappling with a surge in infections and as a new heavily mutated COVID-19 variant, dubbed Omicron, spreads across the globe.

International tourist arrivals will this year remain 70-75 percent below the 1.5 billion arrivals recorded in 2019 before the pandemic hit, a similar decline as in 2020, according to the body. The global tourism sector already lost \$2.0 trillion (1.78 trillion euros) in revenues last year due to the pandemic, according to the UNWTO, making it one of sectors hit hardest by the health crisis.

While the UN body charged with promoting tourism does not have an estimate for how the sector will perform next year, its medium-term outlook is not encouraging. "Despite the recent improvements, uneven vaccination rates around the world and new COVID-19 strains" such as the Delta variant and Omicron "could impact the already slow and fragile recovery," it said in a statement.

The introduction of fresh virus restrictions and lockdowns in several nations in recent weeks shows how "it's a very unpredictable situation," UNWTO head Zurab Pololikashvili said. "It's a historical crisis in the tourism industry but again tourism has the

power to recover quite fast," he added ahead of the start of the WTO's annual general assembly in Madrid today. "I really hope that 2022 will be much better than 2021."

While international tourism has taken a hit from the outbreak of disease in the past, the coronavirus is unprecedented in its geographical spread. In addition to virus-related travel restrictions, the sector is also grappling with the economic strain caused by the pandemic, the spike in oil prices and the disruption of supply chains, the UNWTO said.

Pololikashvili urged nations to harmonize their virus protocols and restrictions because tourists "are confused and they don't know how to travel". International tourist arrivals "rebounded" during the summer season in the Northern Hemisphere thanks to increased travel confidence, rapid vaccination and the easing of entry restrictions in many nations, the UNWTO said.

"Despite the improvement in the third quarter, the pace of recovery remains uneven across world regions due to varying degrees of mobility restrictions, vaccination rates and traveler confidence," it added. Arrivals in some islands in the Caribbean and South Asia, and well as some destinations in southern Europe, came close to, or sometimes exceeded pre-pandemic levels in the third quarter. Other countries however hardly saw any tourists at all, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, where arrivals were down 95 percent compared to 2019 as many destinations remained closed to non-essential travel.

A total of 46 destinations - 21 percent of all destinations worldwide - currently have their borders completely closed to tourists, according to the UNWTO. A further 55 have their borders partially closed to foreign visitors, while just four nations have lifted all virus-related restrictions - Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Mexico. — AFP



VIRGINIA: A man uses his phone at Dulles International Airport in Dulles, Virginia yesterday. From yesterday, travelers from certain parts of southern Africa will be banned from flying to the United States unless they're citizens or legal permanent residents. — AFP

Local

# Kuwait reports 30 new COVID cases, zero deaths

## Saudi reports one COVID death and 25 infections

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's health ministry announced yesterday reporting 30 new COVID-19 cases in the previous 24 hours, taking the total up to 413,327, in addition to zero deaths and zero cases in intensive care units. Meanwhile, Kuwait reported a recovery rate of 99.34 percent as 15 recoveries were registered during the same period. The total cases receiving treatment in hospitals stood at five, while total active cases were 252, the health ministry said in its daily bulletin. The tests to infections ratio stood at 0.14 percent as 21,682 swabs were taken during the same period, it noted.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia reported one additional COVID-19 death along with 25 new cases in the last 24 hours. Saudi Ministry of Health said, in a daily report, that the death toll increased to 8,834 fatalities and the overall infections went up to 549,720 cases. Recovery cases amounted to 538,885 after recording that 29 people were pronounced as cured of the virus infection.

In the meantime, Qatar reported yesterday 158 new coronavirus (COVID-19) infections and 139 recoveries in the past 24 hours. The Ministry of Health stated that the total number of cases

reached 243,290 with 240,666 recoveries.

**Very assuring**

Health Minister Sheikh Basel Al-Sabah had assured the Cabinet during an extraordinary meeting on Sunday that the health situations in Kuwait were very assuring and that there are no COVID-



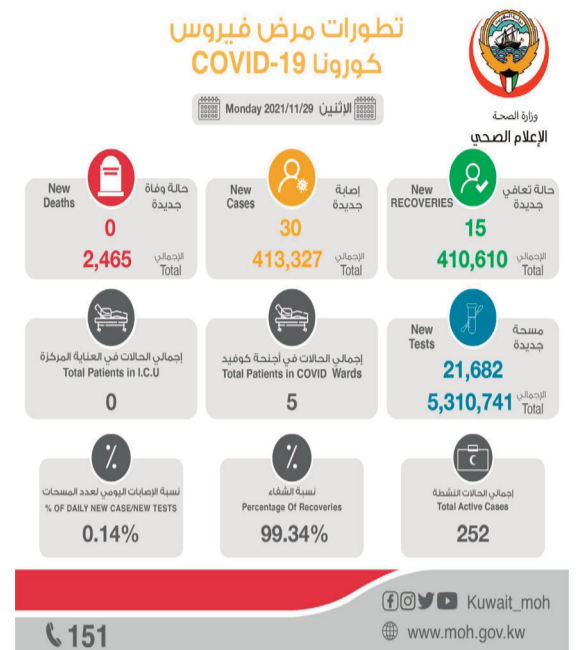
**Recovery rate at 99.34 percent**

19 patients in the intensive care units. The Cabinet called on the public to take the third booster dose to boost immunity against the deadly COVID-19 virus and its latest Omicron variant. It also urged

people to continue to implement health conditions especially wearing face masks.

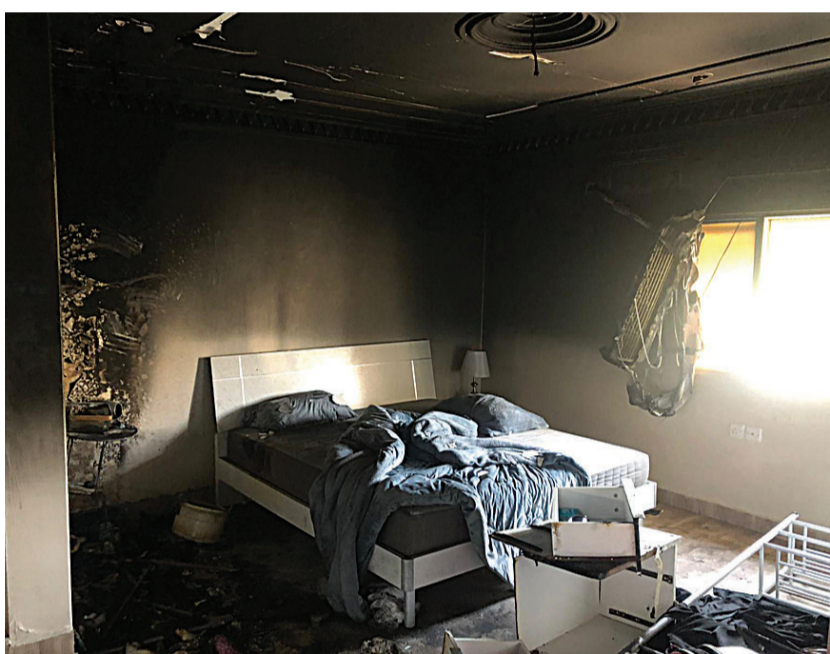
A new COVID-19 variant named Omicron has caused world-wide concern with many countries suspending commercial flights with South Africa, where the variant was detected, and several other African nations. At an earlier meeting late Saturday, the Cabinet imposed a ban on commercial flights from nine African nations over Omicron but allowed cargo. The indefinite ban became effective on Sunday. The countries are South Africa, where the new variant originated, in addition to Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zambia and Malawi. The Cabinet also decided to ban entry of foreigners from those African countries unless they have spent at least 14 days in a third country.

Kuwaiti citizens arriving from those nations must undergo institutional quarantine for seven days with a PCR test done on the day of arrival and a second on the sixth day. The council of ministers also called on citizens to avoid travel out of Kuwait now, unless it is extremely necessary, especially to countries that have reported cases of Omicron.



## Baby hurt in Dhahar house fire

**KUWAIT:** An infant was hurt in a fire reported in Al-Dhahar yesterday, Kuwait Fire Force said in a press statement. Firemen headed to the scene in response to an emergency call and immediately evacuated the house before battling the flames. Emergency medical technicians took the baby to the hospital to be treated for burn injuries sustained in the incident, KFF said, adding that an investigation was opened to reveal the cause of the fire.



## SACGC praises win in science competition

**KUWAIT:** The acting chairman of Sabah Al-Ahmad Center for Giftedness and Creativity (SACGC) Dr Saleh Al-Aqaili expressed his pride in Kuwaiti students winning two prizes out of six in the Future Science Challenge competition, which was held in the UAE with the participation of 251 GCC students. He said in a statement yesterday that the results were announced in a live virtual ceremony through Zoom. Fahad Humoud Abdallah and Sayyad Abdelwahab Behbehani won the best innovator prize for their "Smart Lock" project, while Duajj Khalif Al-Fahad won the officiating committee prize for his project of controlling and tracing car smoke electronically. The competition, considered the first virtual, was organized by Hamdan Bin Rashid Al Maktoum Center for Giftedness and Innovation; run by

Hamdan bin Rashid Al Maktoum Foundation for Distinguished Academic Performance for GCC gifted students. He pointed out that the Future Science Challenge competition aimed to enhance the learning of the principles of artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things by focusing on interdisciplinary learning methods for talented and outstanding students in the field of science and technology.

Aqaili said that 16 teams from SACGC represented Kuwait and were officially accepted by the organizing committee of the competition. He added that the participation comes in an effort to motivate students to be creative and innovative, develop their diverse skills, and build their creativity and competitiveness at the global level.



Dr Saleh Al-Aqaili

## Bahrain FM, GCC chief discuss joint action



MANAMA: Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Zayani meets Gulf Cooperation Council Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf. —KUNA

**MANAMA:** Bahrain's Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Zayani yesterday discussed means of boosting efforts to back the joint Gulf action with Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Nayef Al-Hajraf.

Zayani held a meeting with Hajraf to focus on methods of bolstering cooperation amongst member states for further cohesion and solidarity,

Bahrain Foreign Ministry said in a press statement. The two sides also concentrated on backing the Gulf path to translate GCC leaders' visions and meet aspirations of the region's peoples, it added. The statement pointed to the Secretariat's efforts aiming to push ahead the path of economic integration in favor of GCC peoples to achieve directives of their leaders. —KUNA

## KCB mourns founder Abdulaziz Al-Dousari

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait Credit Bank (KCB) mourned yesterday the passing of its founder and first managing director Abdulaziz Al-Dousari who managed the bank from 1960-1969. The bank's deputy chairman and managing director, Salah Al-Mudhaf, mentioned in a statement that Al-Dousari proposed the idea of

establishing the credit bank during his membership in the council of construction, which was then founded with a capital of 100 million rupees i.e. KD 7.5 million (approximately \$24.7 million). Mudhaf added that Dousari also suggested the idea of the marriage loan and paved the way for industrial and agricultural loans to further encourage productivity and support development. Dousari also played an integral role in spreading awareness in regards to savings, investments and contributing to architectural projects, as well as his role in developing trade and economic sectors in the country. —KUNA

## Kuwait denounces deadly Uganda blasts

**KUWAIT:** The Foreign Ministry yesterday expressed the State of Kuwait's condemnation of the two terrorist blasts that happened in the Ugandan capital Kampala, killing and wounding a number of

innocent people. The ministry, in a statement, expressed Kuwait's solidarity with the Republic of Uganda, emphasizing its principled and unwavering stance, renouncing violence and terrorism. It renewed the call upon the international community to double efforts and "nip this dangerous phenomenon in the bud." The department expressed sincere condolences to families of the victims and wished the injured speedy recovery. —KUNA

## On the occasion of the



**Subscribe or renew your subscription  
KD 20 instead of KD 30 for 1 year**

For individuals only

Tel: 24833199 ext.: 163-325-353- 354 or 66500982



kuwaittimes.net

## Local

**Kuwait Times**  
Established 1961  
The First Daily in The Arabian Gulf

THE LEADING INDEPENDENT  
DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF  
ESTABLISHED 1961

Founder and Publisher  
**YOUSUF S. AL-ALYAN**

Editor-in-Chief  
**ABD AL-RAHMAN AL-ALYAN**

EDITORIAL : 24833199-24833358-24833432  
ADVERTISING : 24835616/7  
FAX : 24835620/1  
CIRCULATION : 24833199 Extn. 163  
ACCOUNTS : 24833199 Extn. 125  
COMMERCIAL : 24835618

P.O.Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait.  
Email: info@kuwaittimes.com  
Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

## Burgan Bank supports UN's 'Orange the World' initiative

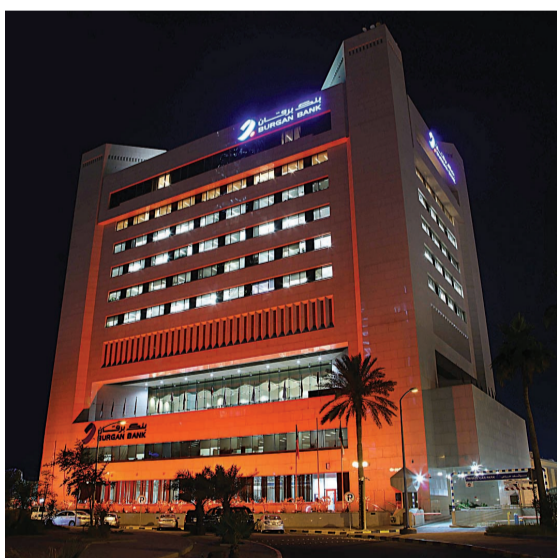
**KUWAIT:** Burgan Bank announced its support for the 16-day global campaign 'Orange the World' in support of the United Nations initiative to eliminate all form of violence against women and girls. The Bank will light its main building in orange from November 15 to December 15, 2021, in confirmation of its strategic dedication to its social responsibility and humanitarian commitments aiming at bringing about positive change in Kuwait.

'Orange the World' initiative is part of the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women that aims at increasing awareness of one of the most widespread human rights violations today and the various forms of physical and psychological violence inflicted on women around the world. The initiative was also launched to help countries achieve the sustainable development goals related to empowering women, enhancing their rights and status, and defining their vital role in the development process.

Commenting on the bank's support for this campaign, Majed Essa Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group, said, "We are proud of supporting this initiative, which reflects our corporate values aligned with the global and local efforts to combat and reduce all forms of discrimination and violence against women. Our participation also translates our strategic commitment to our social responsibility, through which we work to support all actions relevant to enhancing the well-being of society as a whole, including empowering and supporting women as an essential partner in the progress of society and the country."

Ajeel added, "Burgan Bank was one of the first institutions to sign the Women Empowerment Principles (WEPS) at the United Nations website and pledged in 2018 to provide continuous support to achieve a more sustainable future by providing women with equal opportunities for advancement. The Bank is keen to continue promoting women's development and raising awareness of sensitive issues affecting them, and to consolidate its corporate culture principles of male and female employees' wellbeing, equality and equal opportunities at work."

As a leading financial institution, Burgan Bank plays a pivotal societal role and continues to support all national initiatives and State efforts to enhance the well-being of society as a whole and bring about positive change at all levels in Kuwait to help achieve the goals of equality and sustainable development within the framework of the New Kuwait Vision 2035.



## Arab Parliament, IPU sign technical cooperation accord

**MADRID:** The Arab Parliament and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) signed yesterday the first of its kind accord between the two entities to develop technical cooperation.

This came on the sidelines of the IPU's 143rd conference. Arab Parliament Speaker Adel Al-Asoomi and IPU's Secretary General Martin Chungong signed the accord. The agreement will develop relations between the two sides, boost gender equality, and protect and reinforce human rights. After the signing, Secretary General Chungong affirmed that the accord was a turning point and a new stage in relations between the Arab Parliament and IPU.

Speaker Asoomi, on his part, said that the two sides must work on measures to implement the tenets of the accord as soon as possible. The IPU conference, which began last Wednesday, touched on challenges facing democracy and ways to battle division and bolster social cohesion. The conference, which ends today, saw the participation of 120 countries. The IPU was established some 130 years ago and includes 179 parliaments, 13 regional parliamentary authorities. —KUNA

## Photo of the Day



**KUWAIT:** Vehicles drive towards Kuwait City in this file photo. —Photo by Fouad Al-Shaikh

## Kuwait's efforts to empower women admired by int'l community: UN official

### First country in region to include women empowerment in development plan

**KUWAIT:** Janneke van der Graaff-Kukler, Deputy Regional Director of UN Women Regional Office for Arab States, said that the continuous efforts by the Kuwaiti government to empower women socially and economically is universally admired. The global appreciation of Kuwait's state-level efforts came as a result of its commitment to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, endorsed by the UN in 1995. Graaff-Kukler was addressing a ceremony, organized by the Secretariat General of the Supreme Planning Council in cooperation with the UN Development Programme, featuring several government departments and private establishments. The ceremony marked signing of the accord for genders' equality at the workplace by 30 private Kuwaiti companies. Kuwait is a pioneering example in the region with respect of empowering women, both at the public and private levels, Graaff-Kukler said, also noting that the Kuwaiti women have occupied leading positions and have contributed to pushing forward economic development and supplying the labor market



### Thirty companies sign equality accord

with skilled personnel

Dr Khaled Al-Mahdi, the council secretary general, affirmed in statement the Kuwaiti government's ongoing support for women empowerment, noting that this approach is in harmony with the bases of the development strategy and New Kuwait Vision 2035. The Kuwaiti private sector, like the public sector, has managed to employ more women, empowering them with training, opportunities and promotion. The Kuwaiti government's efforts for empowering the women economically have intensified since 2015, when the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, adopted the UN objectives for sustainable development. Graaff-Kukler said, adding this approach was embodied in an action plan, executed over the past years, in tandem with the goals of New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Christian Tudor, the European Union Ambassador to Kuwait, said in his statement that the Kuwaiti government's efforts resulted in attaining more gender equality at work. The EU, last year, applauded Kuwait's adoption of a law on



protection against domestic violence and appointment of eight female judges for the first time in Kuwait's history.

Meanwhile, the UN resident representative, Hideko Hadziliac, stressed on the necessity of maintaining the accomplishments that have been made in Kuwait for gender equality. Dr Lubna Al-Qadhi, the head of the women's research and studies center at Kuwait University, said in her address that Kuwait was the first country in the region that included women empowerment in its development plan. Kuwait University and the planning council have trained many women to make them eligible for occupying leading posts in the public and private sectors, she said, noting that the future holds a lot of opportunities for the Kuwaiti women: with forecast participation in decision making at various levels. —KUNA

## Gulf Bank supports UN initiative to end violence against women

**KUWAIT:** Gulf Bank is renewing its participation in "Orange the World," a global initiative launched by the United Nations to eliminate violence against women. The event will take place on 25 November 2021, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and will kick off 16 days of activism that will conclude on 10 December 2021, which is International Human Rights Day.

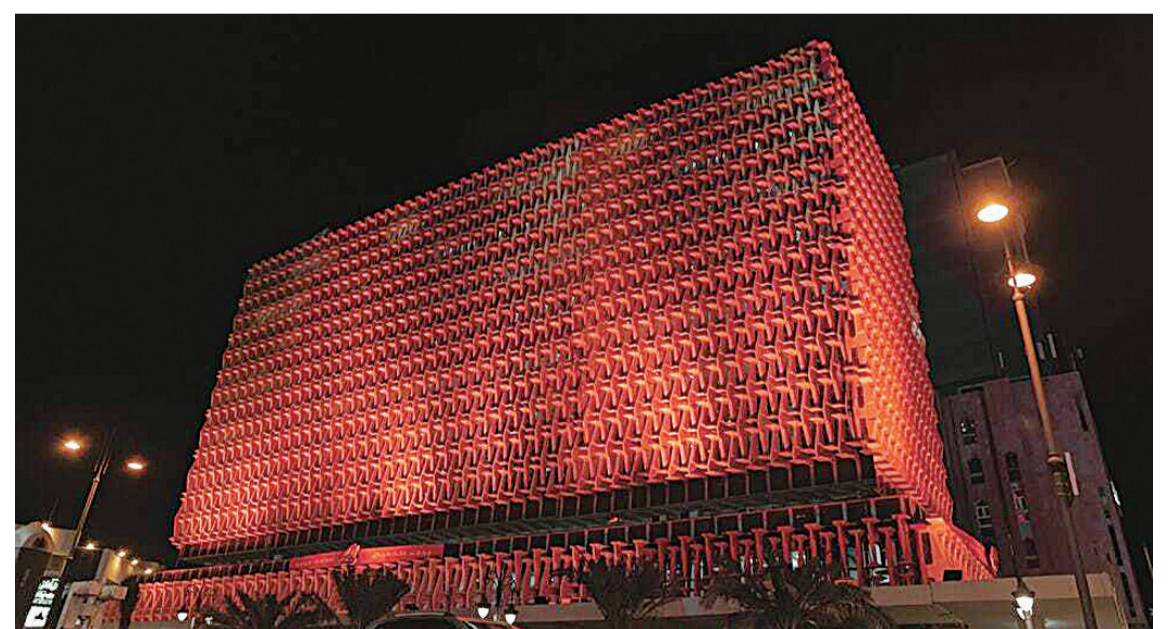
Throughout the campaign, Gulf Bank will be illuminating its main building in orange in support of the efforts helping to eliminate violence against women, raise the level of awareness on social media and champion broader human rights.

This year, Gulf Bank is renewing its participation in the global initiative as part of its unwavering commitment to societal sustainability, and in support of national efforts working to achieve the United Nations' fifth sustainable development goal (SDG), gender equality, which also falls under the national development plan and Kuwait's 2035 vision.

In regards to this initiative, Lujain Al-Qenaei, Assistant Manager of Corporate Communications at Gulf Bank, commented: "We are committed to societal sustainability as it is our duty to empower women, protect them from harm, and strengthen their safety in society. At Gulf Bank, we support the 'Orange the World' initiative as part of our belief in



Lujain Al-Qenaei



every woman's right to a safe environment, and in the importance of eliminating and preventing violence against women. Gender equality is one of the many goals that the United Nations is actively seeking, and we are in full support of these efforts."

Gulf Bank's corporate social responsibility initiatives go hand in hand with international efforts, aligning with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. The 17 SDGs are: No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reducing Inequality, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water,

Life On Land, Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals.

Gulf Bank's vision is to be the leading Kuwaiti Bank of the Future. The bank is constantly engaging and empowering its employees as part of an inclusive and diversified workplace in recognition of every employee's role in delivering customer excellence and serving the community at large. With its extensive network of branches and innovative digital services, Gulf Bank is able to give its customers the choice of how and where to conduct their banking transactions, all while ensuring a simple and seamless banking experience. Gulf Bank is committed to maintaining a robust sustainability program at the community, economic, and environmental levels through sustainability initiatives that are strategically selected to benefit both the country and the bank. Gulf Bank supports Kuwait Vision 2035 "New Kuwait" and works with the different relevant parties to achieve it.



Georgia's ex-leader goes on trial, says 'tortured' in jail

## Indian parliament votes to scrap farm reform laws

Page 7

Page 6



PRETORIA: Ethiopians living in South Africa shout slogans during a protest at the US Embassy in Pretoria yesterday, against purported foreign meddling in Ethiopia. — AFP

# Ethiopia denies attack on Sudan

## Government blamed for unrest in the disputed zone

**ADDIS ABABA:** Ethiopia has denied it staged an attack over the weekend along its shared border with Sudan, blaming unrest in the disputed zone on rebels from its war-hit Tigray region. On Saturday Sudan's military said "several" soldiers had been killed in an attack by armed groups and militias linked to the Ethiopian military in the fertile expanse known as Al-Fashaqa. The area has long been a source of tension between Addis Ababa and Khartoum, sparking deadly clashes over the last year.

But in comments that aired on state media Sunday, Ethiopian government spokesman Legesse Tulu dismissed claims the military had attacked Sudan as "groundless". Instead he blamed the violence on the

Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the insurgent group that has been locked in a gruesome war against Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government since November 2020 and claims to be approaching the capital Addis Ababa.

"A large group of insurgents, bandits and terrorists had entered [from Sudan]," Legesse said in comments aired by the Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation, without providing evidence. "The Ethiopian National Defense Force and the local militia have destroyed them," he added. Legesse also said the TPLF was training in Sudan and receiving support from unspecified "foreign backers". The land in Al-Fashaqa has for years been cultivated by Ethiopian farmers, though

Sudan claims it falls within its territory.

In November 2020, around the time Abiy sent troops into Tigray to oust the TPLF, Khartoum stationed troops in Al-Fashaqa, a move Addis Ababa has described as an invasion. Yet Legesse said Ethiopia was keen to resolve the matter peacefully. "The Ethiopian National Defense Force doesn't have an agenda to open an attack on any sovereign country," he said, referring to the military. "There is land that the Sudanese forces have invaded. The government is sitting down to resolve [the dispute] in a peaceful process, through dialogue and negotiation."

The war in northern Ethiopia has killed thou-

sands of people and driven hundreds of thousands more into famine-like conditions, according to UN estimates. Last week Abiy, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, announced he would head to the front to lead operations against the TPLF. On Sunday state media reported that the military and special forces from the Afar region had taken control of the town of Chifra. The area around Chifra has been the site of fierce fighting in recent weeks, with the TPLF apparently trying to seize control of a critical highway that brings goods into Addis Ababa. A TPLF source disputed the state media report Monday, saying "active fighting is going on" — AFP

## Pressure mounts on Syria, Russia over weapons

**THE HAGUE:** Syria and Russia faced renewed pressure to come clean over alleged chemical weapons use as the global toxic arms body met in The Hague yesterday. Damascus was still failing to declare its chemical weapons and admit inspectors. Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) chief Fernando Arias said.

The nerve agent poisoning of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny in Russia meanwhile continues to pose a "serious threat" to world efforts to eradicate chemical armaments, Arias added. Syria denies the use of chemical weapons and insists it has handed over its weapons stockpiles under a 2013 agreement with the US and

Russia, prompted by a suspected sarin gas attack that killed 1,400 in the Damascus suburb of Ghouta.

But Syria was stripped of its OPCW voting rights in April after a probe blamed it for further poison gas attacks, and they will remain suspended until it has fully declared its chemical weapons and weapons-making facilities. "To date Syria has not completed any of these measures," Arias told the meeting, adding that its declarations "still cannot be considered accurate and complete." Damascus was also continuing to deny a visa to an OPCW weapons inspector, leading the organization to refuse to deploy a team there, said Arias. He said he was arranging a meeting with Syria's foreign minister to discuss the breaches.

Russia meanwhile has been accused of failing to answer questions about the 2020 Novichok poisoning of Navalny, which Western powers have blamed on the Kremlin. "The use of chemical weapons on the territory of the Russian Federation also

poses a serious threat to the convention," Arias said. Moscow had asked OPCW inspectors to come to Russia to investigate but Arias said the visit had not taken place due to conditions set by the Russian authorities that were stricter than those imposed by other countries. London and Washington meanwhile pushed Moscow and Damascus on chemical weapons.

"We call again on Russia and the Assad regime to comply with their obligations," Bonnie Jenkins, the US Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security, said in a statement to the meeting. British junior defense minister Annabel Goldie said Russia must not only answer questions on Navalny but also the Novichok poisoning of former KGB agent Sergei Skripal in Salisbury in 2018. "There is no plausible explanation for these poisonings other than Russian involvement and responsibility," Goldie said. Moscow has always denied involvement in both incidents. — AFP



A picture taken on January 26, 2013 shows Olympian sprinter Oscar Pistorius posing next to Reeva Steenkamp at Melrose Arch in Johannesburg.

## Oscar Pistorius moved to new prison for parole process

**JOHANNESBURG:** South African Paralympic champion Oscar Pistorius has moved to another prison as part of his parole process after serving half his sentence for murdering his girlfriend, prison services said yesterday. The athlete has served more than half of a 13-year jail term, the minimum required to qualify for parole, for murdering model Reeva Steenkamp in 2013.

He has now been transferred from South Africa's administrative capital Pretoria to a prison in the southern city of Gqeberha, formerly Port Elizabeth. "Oscar Pistorius has been moved to a prison in Gqeberha. He will stay there until the process for his parole ends," a Correctional Services

spokesman told AFP.

Pistorius killed Steenkamp in the early hours of Valentine's Day in 2013 when he fired four times through the door of his bedroom toilet. The double amputee was found guilty of manslaughter in 2014 and sentenced to six years in jail, but the conviction was later upgraded to murder in 2015 and led to a 13-year term.

Pistorius, 35, has always denied the murder, saying he was convinced a thief had broken into his ultra-secure Pretoria home. Tania Koen, a lawyer for the Steenkamps, said the prison services would send social workers to talk to the parents and prepare them for the application process. — AFP

## Fleeing Yemenis face desert winter

**MARIB:** Forced to flee fighting in Yemen's brutal war, Ali Yehya Hayba and his family find themselves crammed into a desert tent with dozens of others, fearing the onset of winter. Hayba, his wife and their seven children escaped to the Al-Sumya camp east of Marib city, the government's last northern stronghold, after clashes escalated nearby. The family, displaced for the second time in the seven-year civil war, have nothing but two blankets to keep

them warm during the cold nights.

"It is part of the Empty Quarter desert. There are no humanitarian services, no schools, no hospitals or any other services," Hayba, 39 said. Al-Sumya, with its clusters of makeshift tents, has witnessed an influx of displaced people, with hundreds arriving in a month, according to the International Organization for Migration. The camp, with scant resources, bears testament to a conflict that has forced millions from their homes, creating what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

"We have been displaced two or three times now," said Ali Abdullh, another of the camp's residents. "We have not received blankets or mattresses, and the cold is going to kill us." The Hayba family share a tent with six other fami-

lies, with only two bales of straw for around 35 people to sleep on. "We suffer from a lot of issues here," he told AFP. "We can't put up a curtain for privacy, and we don't even have the capability to set up a proper bathroom... Every three or four children share one blanket."

The Iran-backed Houthis rebels began a big push to seize the strategic city of Marib in February and, after a lull in fighting, they renewed their campaign in September. Despite aerial bombardment from the Saudi-led coalition, the Houthis claim to be tightening their grip around Marib, with fighting raging to the north, west and south of the city. IOM spokeswoman Angela Wells said about 60 families were sheltering at Al-Sumya until this month, when an estimated 1,200 fleeing households arrived. — AFP

## International

# Georgia's ex-leader goes on trial, says 'tortured' in jail

## All charges against me are trumped-up and politically motivated

**TBILISI:** Georgia's jailed opposition leader and ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili denounced yesterday his "politically motivated" prosecution and ill-treatment in prison as he went on trial on abuse of office charges. It was his first public appearance since he was arrested on October 1 shortly after his return from exile. Georgia's president from 2004 to 2013, Saakashvili had refused food for 50 days to protest against his prosecution.

"Everyone knows I must not be in jail because all the charges against me are trumped-up and politically motivated," Saakashvili said, addressing the judges from a glass box in the Tbilisi City Court. At one point during his emotional speech in the courtroom, he switched to English to make a statement "for Georgia's international partners". "I was tortured, I was treated inhumanely, beaten up, and humiliated" in custody, said Saakashvili. He lost about 20 kilograms (44 pounds) during his hunger strike, and yesterday the 53-year-old looked pale.

He also admitted making "more than enough mistakes" during his nine years in power. "I very much regret numerous mistakes, first of all that we have failed to build independent judiciary. I apologize to everyone who has suffered as a

result," he said. More than 1,000 Saakashvili supporters rallied outside the court in the capital, waving Georgian and EU flags and chanting his name. Police arrested several dozen demonstrators after they blocked traffic at a nearby street, pro-opposition Mtavari TV said.

Saakashvili called off the hunger strike when he was moved to a military hospital on November 20 after doctors warned he could soon die. The Georgian authori-

Saakashvili's alleged role in a violent police crackdown on an opposition protest in 2007 that was reportedly masterminded by a Kremlin-backed oligarch in order to derail Georgia's bid to join NATO. Saakashvili at the time admitted that police used excessive force against protesters, resigned and called snap presidential polls, which he subsequently won. He told the judges yesterday that he "did not give any instructions to anyone" to carry out the police operation.

### 'Political revenge'

His lawyer Dito Sadzaglishvili told AFP that Saakashvili "had no role whatsoever in ordering and planning the police operation". "Prosecutors have failed to present any evidence of Saakashvili's wrongdoing," he said. Last week, Saakashvili said on Facebook that he believed there was "zero chance" that he would see justice "in this court". The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims has condemned Saakashvili's treatment in prison, while Georgian rights groups said he was "subjected to psychological torture in custody".

Amnesty International has branded Saakashvili's treatment "not just selective justice but apparent political revenge". Speaking in court, Saakashvili also



### Police arrest several dozen demonstrators

ties initially banned him from attending the trial but then reversed the decision, after the US Department of State demanded his right to a fair trial be respected. In 2018, Saakashvili was sentenced in absentia to six years in prison on two counts of abuse of office and is facing two more trials on similar charges. Yesterday's trial concerns



**TBILISI:** Georgia's jailed opposition leader and ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili arrives in the defendant's box for a hearing at the city court of Tbilisi yesterday. —AFP

thanked Georgians for their "support and solidarity" and called for a "peaceful mobilisation" to end the rule of oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili's Georgian Dream party. Georgia's richest man, Ivanishvili is widely believed to be calling the shots in the country, despite having no official political role.

Saakashvili's arrest exacerbated a political crisis stemming from parliamentary polls last year that the opposition

denounced as fraudulent. It has also spurred the largest anti-government protests in a decade. Critics have accused the Georgian Dream government of using criminal prosecutions to punish political opponents and journalists. Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili sparked an uproar recently when he said the government had been forced to arrest Saakashvili because he refused to quit politics. — AFP

### News in brief

#### Hotel escapees in isolation

**BADHOEVEDORP:** Dutch authorities placed a couple in isolation in hospital after they made a "not really wise" bid to abscond from a quarantine hotel for COVID-positive passengers from South Africa, officials said yesterday. The fugitives, a 30-year-old Spanish man and a 28-year-old Portuguese woman, were found by border police on a Spain-bound plane at Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport on Sunday and arrested. "We heard that people left the hotel, unfortunately, even if they were advised to stay there. So we had to take action and we made the arrest," Robert van Kapel, spokesman for the border police at Schiphol Airport said. "Now they are in a place where they are isolated, in a hospital," he said. The hotel near the airport is where most of the 61 people who tested positive for coronavirus after arriving on two flights from South Africa on Friday are in quarantine. Thirteen of those 61 have tested positive for the new Omicron variant. — AFP

#### 4 Burkina soldiers killed

**OUAGADOUGOU:** Four soldiers were killed in an attack in northern Burkina Faso, security sources said yesterday, bringing the toll from two weeks of raids by suspected jihadists to at least 80. An army unit in Solle, in Loroum province bordering Mali, came under fire at around 5am on Sunday, a source said. "Four soldiers were killed and several were wounded... around 10 terrorists were neutralized in a counter-attack," the source said. The armed forces swept the area with air support, the source added. Another security source confirmed this account and said a civilian was among the casualties, although it was not known whether the individual had been killed or wounded. The attack is the third deadly assault in two weeks against the Sahel state's beleaguered armed forces. Its troops and police are struggling with a six-year-old jihadist insurgency that swept in from neighboring Mali, steered by groups linked to Al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State. — AFP

#### Greeks urged to leave Ethiopia

**ATHENS:** Greece's foreign ministry yesterday urged Greek nationals to leave Ethiopia, warning that conditions in the war-torn country were becoming "increasingly unpredictable". "It is recommended to Greek nationals living in Ethiopia that they leave the country on available commercial flights as soon as possible," the ministry said in a statement. The ministry said safety conditions in Ethiopia were "particularly fragile." It said Greeks who chose to remain should limit their movements, stock up on food, water and fuel, and stay in contact with the Greek embassy in Addis Ababa and the ministry's crisis management team. The US, Canada and other nations have also told their citizens to leave the country amid fears that Tigrayan rebels could march on the capital. The war erupted in November 2020 when Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize, sent troops into the Tigray region to topple its ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). —AFP

## 'I just want a bone': Mexico's search for 95,000 missing

**MATAMOROS:** A mother pleaded desperately with a soldier for a chance to find the remains of her son, one of more than 95,000 people whose disappearances haunt violence-plagued Mexico. "I just want a bone to lay to rest beside my husband," she said. The woman, whose son disappeared a year ago, begged to be allowed into a former cornfield in the northeastern state of Tamaulipas where half a ton of human remains have been found since 2017.

"Answer me! Do you have children?" said the mother, in her 50s, but she received no response from the soldiers. The site, La Bartolina, is located a few kilometers from Matamoros, a city on the border with the United States beset by violence linked to drug trafficking and other organized crime. It is considered an "extermination camp" by the National Search Commission, the official body that coordinates the hunt for Mexico's missing.

Access to the site is forbidden even for victims' relatives, who often accuse the authorities of ineffectiveness and so undertake their own searches. The mother, who did not want to be named due to concerns for her safety, has no proof that her son's remains are at La Bartolina. But she decided to go there after learning that other relatives would be visiting.

### Crime, corruption

More than 11,800 people are registered as missing in Tamaulipas, which sits on a drug smuggling corridor. Along with the western state of Jalisco, it has seen the largest number of disappearances in Mexico. Countrywide, 95,121 people have gone missing, according to official figures released Friday during a visit by the UN Committee on Enforced Disappearances. During the 10 days the UN team spent in Mexico, 100 people disappeared, the committee said. It denounced what it called the ineffectiveness of the authorities, arbitrary decisions by the courts and a general culture of "impunity."

People began to vanish during the Mexican authorities' so-called dirty war against the revolutionary movements of the 1960s-1980s. But it was

## Rwanda bans flights with southern Africa over COVID-19 fears

**NAIROBI:** Rwanda has barred direct flights to and from nine countries in southern Africa, joining a growing list of nations that have imposed travel restrictions over a new, heavily mutated COVID-19 variant. The new variant, dubbed Omicron, was first reported in South Africa last week, with cases subsequently detected in several countries, and many governments have moved swiftly to reimpose containment measures. Direct flights between Rwanda and southern Africa will be temporarily suspended "effective immediately," Prime Minister Edouard Ngirente announced late Sunday.

"While the variant has not been detected in Rwanda, its effects are potentially dangerous," Ngirente said in a statement, urging extra vigilance. The countries affected by the ban are Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe. All passengers who have arrived from those countries in the past seven days have to spend a week in quarantine, at their own costs, in designated hotels in Rwanda, according to the announcement.

Rwanda, a country of 13 million people, will also reimpose a mandatory 24-hour quarantine for all



**HERMOSILLO:** Members of the Madres Buscadoras de Sonora (Seeker Mothers of Sonora) civil organization review sacks with possible human remains inside, on the side of the road, on the outskirts of Hermosillo. —AFP

after then-president Felipe Calderon launched a military offensive against the drug cartels in 2006 that the number of people missing - and murdered - began to soar. Since then, the country of 126 million people has recorded 300,000 murders, including more than 36,000 in 2020 alone - an average of nearly 100 every day.

"Organized crime remains one of the main causes of disappearances," said Laura Atuesta, an expert at the Center for Research and Teaching in Economics. In Mexico, myriad gangs fight for control of lucrative routes for smuggling drugs, migrants and stolen fuel. The disappearances are also a result of "corruption of police forces linked to organized crime," Alejandro Encinas, a deputy minister responsible for human rights, said in mid-November.

The missing are mostly young people, aged 15 to 30, who are trapped in poverty - which afflicts 44 percent of the population - and unable to find work. Others are caught in a vicious circle of gang recruitment or were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time. In some areas, young girls fall victim to human trafficking - the theme of Mexican-Salvadoran director Tatiana Huezo's movie "Noche de Fuego" (Prayers for the Stolen) that received a special mention in the Cannes Film Festival's "Un Certain Regard" competition this year.

passengers. The East African country has enforced some of the strictest containment measures on the continent and implemented a rigorous regime of testing and contact-tracing. The World Health Organization (WHO) warned Monday that the new variant poses a "very high" risk globally. Even if the new strain proves to be less deadly than previous ones, it could put more pressure on hospitals if it spreads more easily, it said.

"If another major surge of COVID-19 takes place driven by Omicron, consequences may be severe," WHO said in a technical note, adding that "to date, no deaths linked to Omicron variant have been reported." South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday protested the "unjustified" travel bans and called for their immediate reversal. "We call upon all those countries that have imposed travel bans on our country and our southern African sister countries to immediately and urgently reverse their decisions," Ramaphosa said.

Malawian President Lazarus Chakwera on his part accused Western countries of "Afrophobia" for shutting their borders. The head of the WHO in Africa also cautioned against border closures. "With the Omicron variant now detected in several regions of the world, putting in place travel bans that target Africa attacks global solidarity," WHO regional director general Matshidiso Moeti said in a statement. Dozens of nations including Africa's Angola and Mauritius have imposed travel restrictions since South African scientists flagged Omicron on Thursday. —AFP

### 'They'll do nothing'

In La Bartolina, Maria Isela Valdez, who leads a group of relatives of missing persons, railed against the security forces blocking the mothers from entering the site. "Why weren't the National Guard, the army and the navy here when people were taken, tortured, massacred, burned and buried?" Valdez, 58, demanded. Together with her 38-year-old daughter Delia Quiroa she was looking for her son Roberto, who was abducted in the nearby city of Reynosa in 2014. In June 2019, Valdez knelt in front of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador to ask for his help. And her daughter publicly asked the Gulf Cartel, a dominant criminal group in the area, for a truce in July to be able to enter Bartolina and find her brother's remains. — AFP

## Turkey seeks Egypt and Zionist thaw after UAE talks

**ANKARA:** Turkey will take steps to improve relations with Egypt and Zionist entity similar to those taken with the UAE, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in comments published by Turkish media yesterday. Ties between Turkey and the UAE were strained over regional issues, but Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed's visit to Ankara last week thawed relations as the countries sealed multi-billion-dollar investments.

"Just as a step was taken between us and the United Arab Emirates, we will take similar steps with the others," Erdogan told Turkish reporters on board his plane returning from a trip to Turkmenistan at the weekend, NTV broadcaster reported. He suggested Turkish ambassadors could be sent back to Egypt and Zionist and said he was planning a return visit to the UAE in February. "Now when we have made our decision, we will of course be in a position to appoint ambassadors within a defined schedule," Erdogan said, without offering a timeline.

Turkey and Egypt broke off relations after the 2013 overthrow of ex-Islamist president Mohamed Morsi, who was supported by Erdogan. They expelled their respective ambassadors and downgraded their relations in 2013. In 2018, Turkey ordered out Zionist ambassador over the killing of protestors along the Gaza Strip border. Turkey sought a rapprochement with Egypt earlier this year despite supporting opposing sides in the conflict in Libya. —AFP

## International

## Japan bars new foreign arrivals over Omicron

## Philippines suspends decision to allow vaccinated tourists entry

TOKYO: Japan will reinstate tough border measures, barring all new foreign arrivals over the Omicron COVID variant, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida announced yesterday, just weeks after a softening of strict entry rules. "We will ban the (new) entry of foreigners from around the world starting from November 30th," Kishida told reporters.

Japan's borders have been almost entirely shut to new overseas visitors for most of the pandemic, with even foreign residents at one point unable to enter the country. In early November, the government announced it would finally allow some short-term business travelers, foreign students and other visa holders to enter the country, while continuing to bar tourists.

Tokyo had already announced on Friday it would require travelers permitted to enter Japan from six southern African countries to quarantine in government-designated facilities for 10 days on arrival. The step was expanded to a total of nine countries over the weekend. That measure now affects travelers coming from South Africa and neighboring Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Malawi and Mozambique. Kishida said yesterday that further quarantine restrictions would be imposed on arrivals from an additional 14 countries and regions where the variant has been detected, without giving further details. The prime minister said Japan is "in a stronger position against the Omicron variant than other countries," citing voluntary mask-wearing and self-restraints about risk behaviors. Japan has recorded just over 18,300 coronavirus deaths during the pandemic, while avoiding tough lockdowns. After a slow start, the country's vaccination program picked up speed, with 76.5 percent of the population now fully inoculated.

It has not detected any Omicron cases but the National Institute of Infectious Diseases is analyzing a case of a traveler from Namibia who recently tested positive for the coronavirus. Kishida said he recognized there "might be criticism" that the border tightening was "too cautious when we don't have a full understanding of the situation." "I take full responsibility for that," he added. G7 health ministers are set to meet later in the day to discuss the new

strain-first detected in South Africa—and the fresh challenge it poses to global efforts to battle the pandemic.

The Philippines also said it would temporarily suspend plans to allow fully vaccinated tourists entry, in a bid to prevent the variant taking off in a country where most of the population remains unvaccinated. Manila had hoped to revive the country's battered economy by allowing jabbed tourists entry as of tomorrow.

The variant is also throwing a tentative opening-up into doubt in Australia, where the government is now reconsidering plans to relax border restrictions further in just two days. But with three Omicron cases confirmed in people flying into Australia from southern Africa—two landing in Sydney and one in the northern city of Darwin—Prime Minister Scott Morrison appeared reluctant to re-impose the kinds of strict lockdowns seen earlier this year. "We don't just need to learn to live alongside COVID, we need to learn to live alongside the variants as well," he said.

## 'Race against time'

Much of the uncertainty surrounds just how infectious Omicron is and how resistant it is to existing vaccines. The prestigious Bambino Gesù hospital in Rome on Sunday released the first "image" of the new strain and confirmed there were many more mutations than seen in the Delta variant, though said that does not mean it is more dangerous. But European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said Sunday governments faced a "race against time" to understand the strain and that vaccine manufacturers needed two to three weeks "to get a full picture of the quality of the mutations".

A long list of countries have already imposed travel restrictions on southern Africa, including key travel hub Qatar, as well as the United States, Britain, Brazil, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Netherlands. The Jewish state has also announced some of the strictest curbs, closing the borders to all foreigners just four weeks after reopening to tourists following a prolonged closure. Angola on Sunday became the first southern African country to suspend all flights from its regional neighbors

reverse course earlier this month. But farmers' unions have vowed to keep up the fight against the government until they secure further concessions.

"First major victory of the farmers' movement today, while other important demands are still pending," said Samyukta Kisan Morcha, a coalition of farmers' groups, in yesterday statement. They are seeking minimum prices for crops and compensation for the families of hundreds of farmers they say died during the protests, among other demands. "I don't think this government has any sympathy for farmers," Vishavjot Mann, who joined a weekend rally for agricultural workers in Mumbai, told AFP.

"The government have just announced that they will repeal the laws, not because they think that they were wrong but because they understand that these protests will hamper their election results," she added. Modi's reversal came ahead of important elections for his Bharatiya Janata Party in states including Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, both home to huge numbers of farmers. The government claimed the reforms, passed in September last year,

allocate more votes to the 21 parties competing than had been cast during the election. "Votes were stolen from (our party)," Bektur Asanov, a candidate from the opposition Ata-Meken party, told a crowd of around 300 outside CEC headquarters. "We don't fear arrests. Again we have shamed ourselves in front of the world with these elections."

## 'Problems' with vote count

Officials have offered competing explanations for the website's failure as votes rolled in, while CEC head Nurjan Shaidabekova offered apologies to the protesters yesterday. "I apologize for the error that emerged on the official site. But I guarantee that our new system is working correctly," Shaidabekova told the crowd, which whistled as she spoke and called for her dismissal.

The crowd dispersed and one opposition candidate, journalist Ali Toktakhunov, said the parties had formed a bloc and given authorities two days to cancel the vote and set a date for new elections. An international vote monitoring mission led by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe did not mention the problem in its statement released yesterday. It said that "election preparations were handled efficiently by the election administration" with voters offered "a wide range of choices" and that the election was competitive. But during the mission's press conference, observer Audrey Glover called the website event "rather concerning". "We look forward to hearing from the CEC how and why this happened," Glover said,

Taiwan and vows to re-take it one day, by force if necessary. It has become increasingly bellicose towards Taiwan since the 2016 election of President Tsai Ing-wen, who rejects its stance that the island is part of Chinese territory. Lithuania is among a group of Baltic and Central European countries that are seeking closer ties with Taiwan, even if that angers Beijing.

In May, Lithuania announced it was quitting China's 17+1 cooperation forum with Central and Eastern European states, calling it "divisive". Lithuania's decision to allow Taiwan to open a representative office under its own name further infuriated China, which downgraded diplomatic ties with the country this month. Beijing balks at any use of the word "Taiwan", or any references to the island as a "country" and diplomatic gestures that might lend a sense of international legitimacy to the island.



## World races to stem new COVID variant



NARITA: People wait to be transported to a quarantine facility after arriving at the Narita Airport in Narita, Chiba prefecture yesterday. —AFP

Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa.

## Calls for 'global solidarity'

South Africa has strongly protested the new restrictions, with its foreign ministry claiming it is being "punished" for first identifying a strain that has now been detected everywhere from the Netherlands to the UK, Canada to Hong Kong. President Cyril Ramaphosa on Sunday urged countries to lift the travel bans "before any further damage is done to our economies", while his counterpart in Malawi, Lazarus Chakwera, accused Western countries of "Afrophobia" for shutting their borders.

The head of the World Health Organization in Africa also urged countries to follow the science rather than impose flight bans in a bid to contain the new COVID strain. "With

the Omicron variant now detected in several regions of the world, putting in place travel bans that target Africa attacks global solidarity," WHO regional director Matshidiso Moeti said. But in a sign of optimism, Singapore and Malaysia eased coronavirus travel restrictions on one of the world's busiest land borders after nearly two years. As of yesterday, vaccinated citizens, those holding permanent residency status and work permits can cross the one-kilometer causeway separating the countries without having to quarantine. And despite the new threat, tens of thousands rallied in Austria to protest the government's recent introduction of compulsory vaccination—the first EU country to do so. Chancellor Alexander Schallenberg said it was "a minor interference" compared to the alternative for a country with one of the lowest vaccination rates in Western Europe. —AFP

## Indian parliament votes to scrap farm reform laws

NEW DELHI: India's parliament voted yesterday to scrap agricultural reform laws that sparked a year of huge protests by farmers, after a surprise U-turn by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Thousands of farmers have been camped out on the outskirts of the capital New Delhi since last year - one of the biggest challenges to Modi's Hindu nationalist government since he came to power in 2014.

The rallies became a lightning rod for discontent in a country where two-thirds of the 1.3 billion population rely on agriculture for their livelihood. In its first meeting for the winter session, both houses of India's parliament rushed through a bill to scrap the laws, after Modi's shock decision to

## Losing parties cry foul after tense Kyrgyzstan vote

BISHKEK: Opposition parties in Kyrgyzstan yesterday accused authorities of stealing their votes in a parliamentary election that was marked by tensions and claims of a coup plot. Several hundred supporters from at least four opposition parties gathered outside the offices of the Central Election Commission in the capital Bishkek, with police watching on. Many raised concerns about an automated count of Sunday's votes that was hit by technical issues, though international observers said the election had proceeded largely well.

In three decades of independence, the impoverished ex-Soviet Central Asian nation has seen three presidents unseated during street protests fuelled by a combination of corruption, crackdowns and anger over perceived election irregularities. Populist leader Sadyr Japarov claimed ahead of Sunday's vote that a coup attempt was being planned, and 15 people were detained. Results based on a near-complete automated count on Sunday evening showed six parties entering parliament, with most expected to be loyal to Japarov's government.

But that was after the election commission's website appeared to suffer technical problems and

## 'Wide support' for Taiwan policy in Lithuania: MP

TAIPEI: A Lithuanian lawmaker visiting Taiwan said yesterday there was "wide support" among the public in his country for warming relations with the island, after a row with China for allowing Taipei to open a de facto embassy in Vilnius. Matas Maldeikis led a delegation of parliamentarians from Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia that arrived in Taiwan on Sunday, the latest in a recent string of visits by foreign politicians despite Beijing's opposition.

China claims sovereignty over self-ruled democratic



NEW DELHI: India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi (C) addresses the media upon his arrival to attend the winter session of the parliament in New Delhi yesterday. —AFP

aimed to deregulate farm produce markets. But farmers said the laws would lead to a corporate takeover of the industry. —AFP



GORNAYA-MAYEVKA: Members of a local election commission empty a ballot box to count votes as part of Kyrgyzstan's parliamentary election in the village of Gornaya Mayevka outside Bishkek. —AFP

responding to a question from a journalist.

Mission head Peter Juel-Jensen acknowledged "significant procedural problems" during the vote count. Russia-allied Kyrgyzstan's most recent round of instability came after parliamentary elections a year ago, when supporters of losing parties took to the streets to denounce a vote they said was rigged in favor of parties close to then-president Sooronbay Jeenbekov. The results were annulled and current leader Japarov, freed from prison during the unrest, was elected in January. —AFP

"Lithuanian government policy toward Taiwan has wide support in our society," said Maldeikis when meeting Tsai. "There are a lot of opportunities for economic and cultural cooperation between our countries," he said. "A long-term stable and efficient cooperation is possible precisely because our societies are based on the same principles of democracy, human rights and rule of law." He hopes Vilnius's soon-to-be-opened trade office in Taipei will help strengthen bilateral ties and contribute to closer relations between Taiwan and the European Union. Beijing yesterday condemned the visit by Baltic lawmakers and said those who "damage China's sovereignty will inevitably pay a due price". On Sunday, China sent 27 warplanes into Taiwan's air defence identification zone, the same day as the Baltic delegation was arriving and after a second delegation of US lawmakers visited the island this month. —AFP

## Finland's secret school for children of IS fighters

HELSINKI: At home in the Finnish capital, Ilona Taimela scrolls through hundreds of WhatsApp chats with her former pupils—pictures of animals, maths sums and simple sentences in English and Finnish. The teacher last year gave lessons to Finnish children imprisoned some 3,000 kilometres (1,800 miles) away in Syria's Al-Hol displacement camp—using only the messaging app.

Al-Hol is a sprawling tent city housing around 60,000 people, mainly women and children displaced by the US-backed battle to expel the Islamic State group from war-torn Syria. Among them are thousands of children of foreign mothers who travelled to Syria to be the wives of IS jihadists.

"Some of the children didn't know what a building is, what a house is, because they've always been in a tent," Taimela told AFP. "There was so much that they needed to learn." Rights observers warn the camp's children are under constant threat from violence, poor sanitation and fires.

"It's a miserable place, it's out of control," said Jussi Tanner, Finland's special envoy charged with ensuring the fundamental rights of the Finnish children in Al-Hol, including access to healthcare and schooling, and eventual repatriation.

Extremist propaganda "is free to roam with no counter-messaging," he said. Tanner had the idea of offering lessons by phone to Al-Hol's Finnish children when schoolchildren everywhere moved to distance learning at the start of the coronavirus pandemic. With the help of Finland's Lifelong Learning Foundation, officials engaged Taimela, a specialist in teaching Finnish kids abroad, and another teacher, to design and teach a curriculum.

## 'What's the weather there?'

With phones banned in the camp, the lessons would have to be in secret, and the politically sensitive project was also to be kept hidden from the Finnish public. Tanner forwarded details about the voluntary classes to the mothers.

"That same day... we got maybe eight children," Taimela said. Soon 23 of around 35 Finnish children in the camp had signed up. "Good morning! Today is Thursday May 7, 2020. The first day of distance school!" Taimela's first message to the children included a smiling selfie.

"The sun is shining here in Finland. What kind of weather is it there?" Soon Taimela and her colleague were exchanging hundreds of text and voice messages a day with the children, who were taught one or two subjects a day.

"The little ones would always get Finnish, and the older ones would get geography or history, and some of them also wanted to learn English." Sending photos used too much data, so the teachers relied on emojis, but soon realised there were no symbols for mathematical fractions or the ubiquitous Finnish blueberry.

"During the year the blueberry [emoji] arrived, so we were happy," Taimela says, laughing. Despite only knowing scant details about the children, Taimela said she and her colleague were "worried all the time about their welfare." —AFP



# Business

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2021

## Erdogan doubles down on low interest rates despite lira fall

### Lira loses over 3% to reach 12.7 to the dollar after Erdogan's statement

**ISTANBUL:** Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed "no compromise" on low interest rates in comments published by Turkish media yesterday, despite a currency crisis. The embattled Turkish lira crashed last week and has continued to lose value against the dollar after a series of rate cuts by the central bank in spite of rampant inflation.

Erdogan ordered Saturday the State Supervisory Council, an auditing body under the president's direct authority, to investigate currency manipulation claims. "I have never advocated, do not advocate and will never advocate for increasing interest rates," Erdogan told Turkish journalists on board his plane returning from a trip to Turkmenistan at the weekend.

"Even if others who think differently appear, Tayyip Erdogan has the same position. I will absolutely not compromise on this issue," he said, quoted by NTV broadcaster. Erdogan strongly opposes high interest rates and goes against orthodox economic thinking to claim they cause high inflation.

He railed against the "interest rate lobby" which seeks to push Turkey to adopt higher rates, insisting inflation would fall before elections in 2023. Under heavy pressure from the president who has sacked three governors since July 2019, the central bank has cut the main interest rate every month since September.

The rate is 15 percent, down from 19 percent before the first rate cut on September 23.

But inflation has remained stubbornly in the double digits for the past two years. The annual rate was at nearly 20 percent in October and there are fears the figure will be much higher for November when that month's data is published Friday.

The lira has lost 42 percent in value against the greenback since the start of 2021, crashing to 13 to the dollar last Tuesday. The lira's weakness has persisted, with the currency losing over three percent to reach 12.7 to the dollar at around 1200 GMT yesterday after Erdogan's comments were published. — AFP



ISTANBUL: A currency exchange office seen in Istanbul. — AFP

## China's Twitter-like Weibo plans \$547m Hong Kong listing

**BEIJING:** US-listed Chinese microblogging platform Weibo is seeking to raise up to \$547 million in a share offer in Hong Kong, documents showed yesterday, the latest China tech company to list closer to home as tensions with the United States rise.

Several US-listed Chinese tech firms such as Alibaba have held initial public offerings in Hong Kong over the past two years as the United States has stepped up scrutiny of Chinese companies. Listing in Hong Kong is seen as a hedge against the risk of being removed from US exchanges and a way of accessing an investor base closer to their home markets.

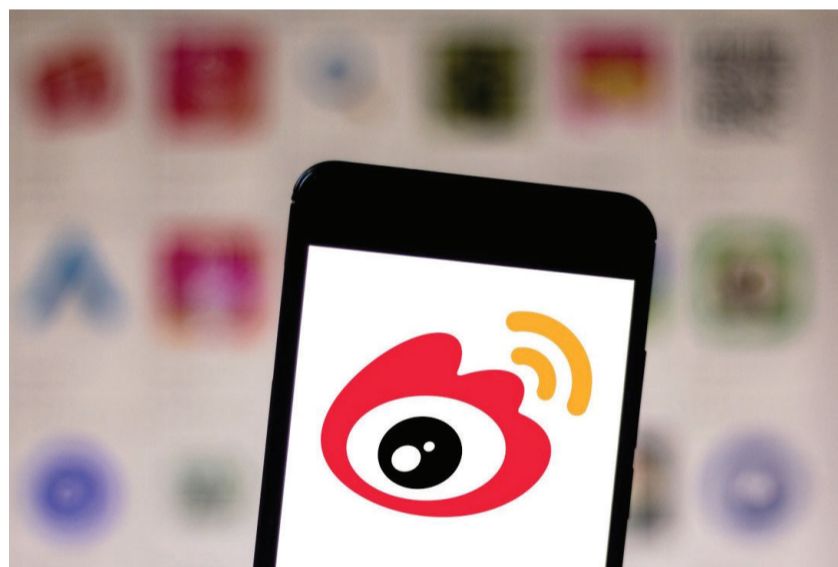
China also has been encouraging its big tech players to list either in

Hong Kong or Shanghai. On Monday, Nasdaq-listed Weibo — China's answer to Twitter — said in a filing that it plans to sell 11 million shares for as much as HK\$388 (\$49.75) each.

Shares are expected to start trading on December 8. Weibo, which launched in 2009 and is among the earliest social media platforms in China, had 566 million monthly active users as of June, it said in a filing.

Its shares have traded on the Nasdaq since 2014. Weibo is among the most widely-used social media platforms in China, where authorities have blocked major international players such as Facebook. Weibo said it plans to use the funds raised from its Hong Kong listing to grow its user base and for research and development.

But it cautioned that it is "subject



to changing laws and regulations regarding regulatory matters, corporate governance and public disclosure" that have increased both its costs and risks of non-compliance. In recent months, Chinese regulators

have launched a wide-ranging clamp-down on tech companies like Alibaba, Tencent and Meituan — clipping the wings of major internet firms that wield heavy influence over consumers' daily lives. — AFP



Jack Dorsey

## Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to step down

**WASHINGTON:** Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey is expected to step down as the social media network's CEO, CNBC reported yesterday. Nasdaq suspended trading of Twitter yesterday amid news reports that Jack Dorsey would step down. Nasdaq cited "news pending" as the reason for the halt in trading.

The CNBC report cites unnamed sources and Twitter did not immediately reply to a request seeking comment. Dorsey is credited with coming up with the idea for Twitter when eventual co-founder Evan Williams gave workers at blogging startup Odeo two weeks to work on fun new projects as a way to break up the daily routine.

According to sources, Dorsey could announce his departure later. The source requested anonymity because the plans, first reported by CNBC, are not yet public. A Twitter spokeswoman did not respond to a request for comment. Dorsey, who is also the chief executive of the payments company Square, was fired from the top job at Twitter in 2008 but returned in 2015.

His leadership has been questioned by employees and investors who believed that he was unfocused and spent too much of his time on Square and other passion projects. Other employees rallied around him during the 2020 attempt to force him out, using the hashtag #WeBackJack as a rallying cry. — Agencies

## Spanish inflation soars to 29-yr high

**MADRID:** Spanish inflation accelerated in November to its highest level in nearly three decades on the back of rising food and gas prices, official data showed yesterday. Consumer prices jumped by 5.6 percent, up from a 5.4 percent increase in October, according to preliminary figures from national statistics institute.

That is its fastest pace since September 1992, when the rate was 5.8 percent. The surge in inflation in the eurozone's fourth-largest economy was due largely to a spike in food prices, followed by higher gas prices, the statistics office said. Electricity costs, however, declined slightly after a month-long acceleration, it added.

As in other European Union nations, inflation in Spain has risen since the start of the year after consumer prices declined during most of 2020 due to the economic impact of pandemic lockdowns.

In October, eurozone inflation reached 4.1 percent, well above the European Central Bank's tar-



MADRID: Spanish consumer prices jumped by 5.6 percent in November, up from a 5.4 percent increase in October, according to preliminary figures from national statistics institute.

get of two percent and equal to a high set in July 2008. But the bank believes eurozone inflation will peak in November and is set to gradually slow next year as supply bottlenecks and the energy

crunch ease, board member Isabel Schnabel said earlier this month. Investors worry central banks will withdraw their stimulus measures sooner than expected to tame inflation. — AFP

## Should we really worry about inflation figures?

**PARIS:** Whether it is the heating bill, pump prices or making the weekly run to the supermarket, consumers are having to dig deeper and deeper into family budgets. Inflation is complicating the recovery of individual consumers from the pandemic and putting the recovery of the global economy at risk.

### What does the data say?

Inflation figures have been rising for months. In the United States, government data released this week showed consumer prices rose by five percent on an annual basis in October, the highest since 1990. In the eurozone, consumer prices were up 4.1 percent, the highest in 13 years. In Britain, the increase was 4.2 percent.

In all three, inflation is running at more than double the targets set by their central banks. Elsewhere,

inflation is also running hot. In Russia it is 8.1 percent, in Brazil it has hit almost 11 percent, and in Turkey it is nearly 20 percent.

Behind these abstract numbers is the concrete reality of the skyrocketing cost of filling up the gas tank, higher prices for meat and other basic foodstuffs. In the United States, many food companies are cutting the size of packages to avoid raising prices, a practice called shrinkflation. Restaurant owners have told AFP they have begun to remove products which have become too expensive from their menus, such as bottled water or crab cakes.

### Why are prices rising?

After stalling in 2020, the motor of the global economy is spluttering back to life this year. This rebound, plus shifts in consumption away from services to goods by households, means a boom in demand that has outstripped supply, which in some cases is still being hobbled by the pandemic.

This has pushed up prices of many raw materials, first and foremost crude oil, but copper and wood as well. Certain manufacturing sectors have been hit by a lack of semiconductors or computer chips, in particular the auto and mobile phone industries.

Global transport networks have also snarled up. Some ports have become clogged because of a lack of workers to offload cargo while in Britain there is an acute lack of truck drivers. Freight prices have skyrocketed.

### Transitory, really?

The refrain from central bankers about inflation has been unchanging: it is transitory as it is the result of the low point of comparison from last year and is being caused short-term supply problems that will resolve themselves. The argument has begun to wear thin as the months have passed. "It is now clear that this process will take longer than initially expected, and the inflation overshoot will likely get worse before it gets better," said analysts at investment bank Goldman Sachs in a note to clients.

They believe inflation will begin to wind down only in the middle of next year. A sign of the growing concern is that Google searches for the word "inflation" have hit their highest levels in the United States and Europe since tracking began in 2004. This is one of the worries of central bankers: that a sentiment of persistent inflation prompts widespread demands for wage hikes that companies

have to pass on as higher prices, thus triggering a vicious spiral of wage and price hikes. In the United States, the situation is complicated by the fact that there is actually a shortage of workers in many sectors, with many companies raising wages to secure staff and passing higher costs onto customers.

Companies are "expected to bid up the price of scarce labor going forward," said Jacob Kirkegaard, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington.

### Why is this a minefield?

Usually, central banks would raise interest rates to tamp down price increases. But given that the global economy is still suffering from the pandemic and there are signs that the recovery underway is already weakening, policymakers are worried about the risk they could kill it off.

Several central banks have nevertheless already raised rates due to inflation pressures, including in Mexico, Brazil and Russia. The head of the US Federal Reserve, Jerome Powell, said earlier this week when he was renominated to the post that he would act to "prevent higher inflation from becoming entrenched." — AFP



## Business

# Burgan Bank announces successful completion of its capital increase

## Subscription levels reached more than 220%: Al-Ajeel

KUWAIT: Burgan Bank ("Bank") announced that it has successfully completed its capital increase of KD 71.25 million, to support its business growth and further strengthen its capital levels. The rights issue was well-received, and the transaction was oversubscribed, without the need for public offering or underwriting. The bank offered 375 million shares in the rights issue which was concluded within 15 days. The capital increase process was led by Kamco Investment Company K.S.C.P. (Kamco Invest) as the Lead Manager and Subscription Agent, and Kuwait Financial Centre K.P.S.C. (Markaz) as the Joint Lead Manager and Underwriter.

With the completion of the capital increase, the bank's issued and paid-up capital increased from KD 275.625 million to KD 313.125 million. The bank will use this capital increase to drive its growth strategy in Kuwait, its core market,

and support cautious growth in its key subsidiaries' markets as well as to increase its regulatory capital base.

Majed E Al-Ajeel, Chairman of Burgan Bank Group, commented on the success of the subscription process, saying, "We are thrilled by the great response from all shareholders throughout the subscription process, which resulted in unprecedented levels of demand with subscription levels of more than 220 percent. This achievement is evidence of the shareholders' confidence in the bank's strong financial position and its growth plans. I would like to commend the expertise and professionalism of KAMCO Invest and Markaz, and thank the Central Bank of Kuwait, Capital Markets Authority, and Boursa Kuwait for their ongoing support and guidance, which collectively led to the successful outcome of this transaction."

Masoud M J Hayat, Vice Chairman and Group



CEO of Burgan Bank Group, added, "The capital increase will strongly support the Bank's strategy enabling it to achieve its growth plans, while improving both the financial and operational performance. Burgan Bank will continue to pursue its long-term transformation journey that focuses on recalibrating its operating model, enhancing its

technological infrastructure, and accelerating its digital transformation plan, to maintain its competitive edge and grow its market share. The capital increase will also enable the Bank to grow its credit facilities offerings to SMEs and corporate customers, effectively contributing towards driving economic growth in Kuwait."

The bank's most recent financial results showcased a solid financial performance, with a reported net income attributable to shareholders of KD 40.3 million for the first nine months of 2021, with a strong growth of 23.6 percent compared to same period of the previous year. The financial results also underscored solid operating revenue amounting to KD 166.6 million, which were supported by high non-interest income of KD 73.3 million (up 29.5 percent year-on-year), and the lower loan loss provision levels that improved by 11.6 percent compared to the same period in 2020.

## solutions by stc launches DaaS in tie-up with Virganet

KUWAIT: solutions by stc, the specialized business arm of Kuwait Telecommunications Company - stc, announced its partnership with local cloud and managed service provider, Virganet. Through the partnership, the two companies launched the first local Desktop as a Service (DaaS) solution targeting solutions by stc's B2B customers, as well as various sectors within Kuwait. This initiative falls in line with solution by stc's vision to provide B2B customers with a wealth of innovative products and services all under one roof, especially in this case to support SME customers recover following the business slowdowns due to the pandemic, while fueling the local market with the latest technologies and innovations offered in the digital world.

solutions by stc indicated that offering the DaaS solution in collaboration with Virganet aims to support local SMEs, banks, as well as other businesses in Kuwait to secure their data and explore a range of added features at an affordable and cost-effective price. The solution comes equipped with AI technology that can enhance the productivity in organizational structures by streamlining operations, improving workflows, and cutting back on expenditures to positively impact the business. To ensure a seamless experience, the solution is supported by a dedicated team of experts who can provide guidance and assistance throughout the setup process, as well as address any issues or technical difficulties related to the service.

DaaS is known for its easy configuration and deployment, which can be applied to various business models to protect data while utilizing the full features of the platform. The solution has been designed with a customer-centric approach in mind that focuses on providing a premium user experience, while catering to the diverse needs of solutions by stc's B2B customers. DaaS is also compatible with several solutions currently offered by solutions by stc and is the first service of its kind to be offered in the local market. In terms of usability, businesses of all sizes can benefit from the remote work capabilities and seamless access to information, especially considering the ongoing pandemic.

Seeing as DaaS is a virtual desktop infrastructure hosted in the cloud, the solution will be able to deliver a high level of performance for users on any device and within minutes. The multi-tenancy architecture of DaaS solutions will enable multiple users to take advantage of the cloud-hosted service, reducing the need and cost of acquiring physical desktops. The solution also addresses common challenges faced by IT departments, while providing users with a personalized experience through self-service access to applications and desktops.

Commenting on the new service, solutions by stc mentioned that the steps taken to introduce DaaS solutions in partnership with Virganet for the first time in the local market coincides with the Company's strategy to offer an array of business solutions all under one roof. With a special focus on supporting the SME market in Kuwait, solutions by stc provides an array of cloud-based services such as Microsoft 365, Google products, and other solution that can assist companies in streamlining their operations efficiently and at minimal cost.

solutions by stc has taken great strides to partner with market leaders and introduce new solutions that cater to its diverse customer base. Through these partnerships and collaborations, it has extended its offering line to incorporate a range of cloud-based services, connectivity solutions, fixed or wireless services, 5G technology enabled by stc, ICT, IoT, AI, as well as other IT products and services. Moving forward, the Company will continue searching for innovative methods in both digital and cloud-based solutions that can be applied to existing applications to satisfy the growing demand for personalized solutions. Through its one-stop-shop business model, solutions by stc aims to leverage the latest technologies introduced in the tech-world to provide customers with solutions to their operational challenges while enabling digital innovation.

## News agencies create 'European Newsroom'

BRUSSELS: Sixteen news agencies are to operate a joint, EU-funded "European Newsroom" that, from January 2022, will put out information on the bloc and aspiring member states, officials said yesterday. The combined initiative is led by Germany's DPA and includes AFP, Spain's EFE and Europress agencies and the main agencies from other EU countries Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Italy, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia.

## Sri Lanka kitchens blow up as gas crisis deepens

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka is investigating a sharp rise in kitchen explosions caused by cooking gas that have reportedly killed at least one person and wounded dozens of others, parliament heard yesterday. The island is in the grip of an economic crisis with serious shortages of fossil fuels and other essential goods because of depleted foreign currency reserves. Opposition lawmakers have blamed increased concentrations of propane in liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) cylinders used for

## 'Let's Be Aware': ABK raises awareness

KUWAIT: Al-Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) continues its efforts in raising awareness about customers' rights while banking in Kuwait, by reinforcing the importance of the Consumer Protection Guide issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait. This initiative is part of the year-long 'Let's Be Aware' campaign launched by the Central Bank of Kuwait in collabo-

ration with the Kuwait Banking Association. Ahmad Altayyar, Area Manager - Retail Banking Division at ABK said: "The guide includes key practices that consumers need to be aware of while banking to recognize their rights and their privileges. Protecting consumers' rights and educating our clients is a priority at ABK. Through the 'Let's Be Aware' campaign, we can showcase the importance of inclusion, as well as raise

cooking, relative to the more expensive butane. The government is now probing LPG supplies after a dozen blasts linked to kitchen stoves, consumer affairs minister Lasantha Alagiyawanna told parliament. "During a short space of time there has been a very sharp increase in gas accidents," he said. "We don't want to have 10 to 15 homes blowing up daily, so I have ordered an investigation." An official in Sri Lanka's consumer affairs agency, who asked not to be named, told AFP that higher concentrations of propane were increasing pressure on LPG cylinders, causing leaks that led to explosive fires.

State-run gas agency Litro has denied changing the proportion of butane and propane in domestic gas cylinders, instead blaming poorly maintained stoves and faulty pipes. Local media reports said a 19-year-old woman was killed after a gas cylinder

leaked and exploded in Sri Lanka's east last week. Police have denied the death was due to a gas leak. Consumers have faced serious LPG shortages in recent months with authorities struggling to find foreign exchange to finance gas and crude oil imports.

Sri Lanka's only oil refinery shut for the first time in its 52-year history this month because it could not source dollars to import crude. The island's economy shrank last year as the pandemic took hold and tourism nosedived. A resulting foreign exchange shortage prompted authorities to shore up Sri Lanka's trade imbalance with a broad ban on imports, including some food and agricultural products. That decision eventually sparked food shortages, with supermarkets rationing rice and the price of some staples doubling earlier this month. — AFP

awareness about consumers' rights and the bank's compliance with national and international laws."

The Consumer Protection Guide, issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, is in accordance with the principles of financial consumer protection approved by the Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors of the G20 countries in October 2011. The guide includes a set of principles complementing the various rules and guidelines issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait for protecting customers in their dealings with banks. The 'Let's Be Aware' campaign highlights many topics throughout the year, including bank card usage, guidance on borrowing, fraud management, cybersecurity protocols, awareness about rights of special needs customers, and more.



Ahmad Altayyar

## Huawei MateBook 14s: The best 2.5K high performance intelligent laptop this year in Kuwait

By Islam Al-Sharara

KUWAIT: Today, many top laptop makers have launched 14-inch models and Huawei, the iconic tech giant is becoming a prominent force in this marketplace with laptops that not only offer outstanding performances but also look aesthetically pleasing while retaining a practical size factor for utmost portability.

Huawei has recently launched its new 14.2-inch Huawei MateBook 14s - the 2.5K high performance intelligent laptop. As a new addition to the Huawei MateBook Series designed for smart productivity, the new laptop is steeped in the MateBook DNA, combining aesthetic design, powerful performance, innovative features, and smart office experience.

### Full view touch display

The Huawei MateBook 14s uses a slim body design featuring sharpened edges. It has a 2.5K 90Hz Huawei FullView touch display with a productivity-friendly aspect ratio of 3:2 and a high screen-to-body ratio of 90 percent. Despite including a front-facing camera, the screen still offers immersive viewing. Whether for content browsing or editing, it gives professionals more space to unleash their potential.

### Powerful core performance

The Huawei MateBook 14s packs outstanding performance into its sleek and lightweight body. It is configured with the latest and powerful 11th Gen Intel Core Processor and Intel Iris X2 integrated graphics. The performance mode can be activated



by pressing the "Fn + P" keys shortcut that boosts the CPU TDP to 45W. With support for update 1 Tera byte hard drive (NVMe PCIe SSD), Huawei MateBook 14s allows users to stay productive, unleash creativity and multitask with ease.

### Super battery life

As well as the high performance, the Huawei MateBook 14s offers great battery life with a 60Wh high-capacity battery that helps get rid of low-battery anxiety. Coupled with a pocketable 90W power adapter, the laptop can work for up to 3 hours of productivity work with only a 15-minute charge. The power adapter also supports Huawei SuperCharge for a selected range of Huawei smartphones and tablets. The versatile power adapter makes packing for travelling a lot easier.

### Smart connectivity

Huawei has something for audiophiles, also. Huawei Sound makes its debut with the Huawei MateBook 14s to bring an enjoyable audio experience. A quad speaker array is included on the new laptop, consisting of two tweeters and two woofers that produce powerful bass and crisp trebles. The speakers support Huawei's Sound Field Reproduction algorithms to create high quality sounds coming from each side. Four microphones sitting on the edges provide sound pick-up from a distance of up to five meters. The AI noise cancellation technology makes every sound crystal clear. The Huawei MateBook 14s comes with the industry's first Personal Voice Enhancement technology to eliminate ambient noise whilst picking up the user's voice, so they can be heard loud and clear in calls, conferences or meetings.

The innovative tactile keyboard offers a comfortable and enjoyable typing experience. With 1.5mm key travel and Huawei's proprietary Soft-landing Design, the keyboard provides tactile feedback and makes typing with Huawei MateBook 14s an enjoyable, even for an extended session. Other innovative features include the Fingerprint Power Button, face recognition and Wi-Fi 6 to contribute to smooth and secure smart office experience.

Choosing a laptop can be daunting and a bit complicated. There multiple aspects to consider, from screen size, resolution, processing power and speeds to innovative all-scenario device collaboration features. The newly launched Huawei MateBook 14s certainly ticks all the above boxes making it the most coveted and in-demand 14-inch 2021 laptop right now in Kuwait.

Lifestyle | Features



**Kanye West's old car broke records while up for auction in Wyoming**

The 'Yeezus' rapper's motor made history after his 2019 F-150 Raptor sold for \$86,900, including the \$10 buyer premium - which made it the most expensive Raptor ever sold - at a sale at Musser Bros. Auctions that included a total of seven vehicles previously owned by the 44-year-old star. Harold Musser - the owner of the auction house - told TMZ the sale generated a staggering \$434,780, and attracted 137,000 views and over 800 bids, making it their biggest ever auction. As well as the record-breaking Raptor, a 2017 Ford F-250 sold for \$43,250, while the lowest amount was paid for a 2016 Ford F-250, which attracted 84 bids before going for \$39,250. Another 2019 Raptor - which had a slightly higher mileage - went for \$72,515, while a 2018 raptor sold for exactly \$1,000 less. Two 2020 Ford Expeditions went for \$62,250 and \$67,000 to complete the sale. The cars were previously sold by the 21-time Grammy Award winner to the local Ford dealership in Cody - the city where the 'Jesus Walks' rapper has a ranch, which is currently on the market for \$11 million - who then put them up for auction. Along with the ranch, the 'Gold Digger' rapper also has listed his \$57 million Malibu mansion for sale. This comes after he and his wife Kim Kardashian West - and mother to his four children North, eight, Saint, five, Chicago, three, and Psalm, two - separated earlier this year. Despite splitting from his wife, Kanye has vowed to win back the SKIMS founder, who has recently been romantically linked with Pete Davidson. Last week, he shared a photo of them kissing on his Instagram Story, along with a screenshot of a TMZ article that read "Kanye West Says God Will Bring Kim and Him Back Together, Inspire Millions."

**Rochelle Humes saving wedding dress for kids**

Rochelle Humes hopes her children will wear her wedding dress one day. The 32-year-old presenter and her husband Marvin Humes - with whom she has daughters Alaia-Mai, eight, and Valentina, four, and 13-month-old son Blake - are planning to renew their marriage vows for their 10th anniversary next year and though she doesn't think her original gown will fit her anymore, she hopes the dress will be used again one day. Discussing a message from her pal Emma Willis - who wore her wedding dress and urged guests to do the same when she and husband Matt Willis renewed their vows in 2018 - she said: "Emma messaged me, 'You've got to wear your wedding dress,' and I said: 'Emma, it's in the loft!' 'I do still have it, but I don't think I will be able to wear it again after three kids! I'm hoping my kids will want to wear it some day. It's lovely.' Rochelle and Marvin, 36, have yet to book their vow renewal because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

ic. She told Fabulous magazine: "We did say we were going to renew the vows, so that's the plan. We just need to figure out where. 'We need to see how restrictions will look then, because it's hard to plan things now.' 'Obviously, our kids weren't there at the time, so it'd be nice to do something to celebrate.' While Marvin has been on a reunion tour with JLS, Rochelle admitted it's unlikely she would get back with The Saturdays - which also included Una Healy, Frankie Bridge, Mollie King and Vanessa White - because it wouldn't work for her family commitments. She said: "The JLS boys are having a lovely time, but I can't picture it. No. It's a time in my life that feels so long ago. 'We all see each other, but we've not had a conversation about that. I just can't imagine doing that again.' 'My kids are my number one. Everything has to fit around them. Even thinking about the band reunion, it wouldn't work for my life now as my priorities are them. 'I don't



work weekends unless it can't be helped - they are for my kids. 'For half-term, I took two weeks off and everybody still tried to call me, but I was like: 'No, I'm not working.' I'm not on my phone and I'm really present for them."



**Hadid has been left 'heartbroken' over Abloh's death**

Gigi Hadid has been left "heartbroken" over Virgil Abloh's death. The 26-year-old supermodel penned a touching tribute to the Off-White founder after it was revealed on Sunday he had passed away following a secret battle with a rare form of cancer: a cardiac angiosarcoma. She wrote on Instagram: "I am heartbroken by the loss of my dear friend, and a friend to the world, Virgil Abloh. He was 1 of 1.(sic)" The message - underneath a slideshow of memories of Gigi and the 41-year-old Louis Vuitton Menswear Creative Director, including backstage at a fashion show - continued, where the model praised his "kindness and energetic generosity". Gigi wrote: "His kindness and energetic generosity left a lasting impression on every life he touched - he made everyone feel seen and special. He will be deeply missed, cherished, and celebrated by me and all the people and industries that have been lucky enough to work around & know the true supermova behind this man." And Gigi vowed Virgil "would be 'forever adored' and remain a source of inspiration eternally. She continued: "I picture

him now like our Mickey Mouse .. forever with us, forever adored, forever magical, forever guiding us with that special Virgil FUN: I'm sure that's how he wanted to be remembered, but still it will never be the same without him in the room. "You will continue to inspire me every day. V. I feel blessed and honored by every moment. Rest Easy, my friend. You are so loved. You were the difference. As we always said. "See you somewhere, soon.(sic)" She ended her message by offering her "deepest condolences" to his family, including his wife Shannon, his two children Lowe and Grey and his parents and sister: "Sending my deepest condolences, light, and strength to Shannon, their kids, and his whole family. [white heart emoji] (sic)" The news of Virgil's death was shared on his own Instagram page with a message that read: "We are devastated to announce the passing of our beloved Virgil Abloh, a fiercely devoted father, husband, son, brother, and friend. He is survived by his loving wife Shannon Abloh, his children Lowe Abloh and Grey Abloh, his sister Edwina Abloh, his parents Nee and Eunice Abloh, and numerous dear friends and colleagues." The message went on to explain the designer "chose to endure his battle privately since his diagnosis in 2019, undergoing numerous challenging treatments, all while helming several significant institutions that span fashion, art, and culture." —Bang Showbiz

**Michael Strahan is not nervous about going into space**

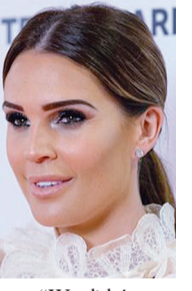
The FOX NFL Sunday' host will be on board Jeff Bezos' next Blue Origin flight on 9 December and he insisted he has no concerns about making the trip and he's feeling "excited" for it. He said: "I'm excited. I am more nervous talking about football today than I am about going to outer space... It feels right. I feel good, I feel comfortable, I feel safe... I'm looking forward to it. "It's going to be epic, that's how I describe it... Something you think about as a kid, but now it's going to happen... It's mind-blowing, to be honest with you." The 'Good Morning America' host was put at ease by the Blue Origin team - and admitted he'd be more reluctant to go skydiving or bungee jumping than to fly to space. He said: "Everyone I've talked to, they made me feel comfortable with it. Everyone involved is a lot smarter than I am. I'm really not nervous... I'm more nervous getting into the ocean 'cause there are sharks there. I would never jump out of a plane and skydive, I'm not gonna bungee jump - but I'm gonna go to space." The 50-year-old star



insisted training for the Super Bowl in is sporting prime was harder than preparing for the trip to outer space. He told 'Extra': "Super Bowl, without a doubt, that's more physical." And Michael dismissed suggestions he is crazy for taking the flight. He said: "If you don't take chances in your life, no one will ever remember your name. Michael - who has Tanita, 29, and Michael Jr, 26, with first wife Wanda Hutchins and 16-year-old twins Isabella and Sophia with second wife Jean Muggli - admitted his youngest kids had an underwhelming reaction when he told them he'd been invited onto the rocket. He said: "They kind of laughed. 'Really, you're going to do that? Oh, that's cool...' That's what you get out of teenagers." In October, William Shatner, 90, became the oldest person to fly to space on a Blue Origin flight. The crew made it up to an altitude of around 66 miles on the suborbital flight, and felt weightlessness. But just a matter of minutes later, they began their descent and their capsule headed back down to Earth thanks to three parachutes. The crew touched down in the desert at a speed of around 15mph.

**Danielle Lloyd has named her daughter Autumn Rose**

The former model and husband Michael O'Neill welcomed their first daughter into the world on 12 November and the 37-year-old beauty - who also has sons Archie, 10, Harry, nine, and seven-year-old George with ex-husband Jamie O'Hara and four-year-old Ronnie with her spouse - has now explained the significance behind the moniker they have chosen for the tot, which she admitted they took some time to settle on. She told Britain's OK! magazine: "I had a few names like Autumn and Meadow and I thought they were really cute. "We didn't decide straight away and I watched her change day-by-day. Michael really liked Rosie and I really like Autumn. I liked both, but then people kept on sending me pictures of dogs called Rosie and I was like, 'Oh no, is this a sign?'. "I just thought, the season is Autumn, she's dark and tanned, she's just so gorgeous she looks like an Autumn. And then we've got Rose in there also after Michael's nan." The former Celebrity Big Brother contestant noted that she knew it was "different" from the "traditional" names she chose for her sons but couldn't think of a better fit and was trying to ignore the opinions of others. She said: "I know it's different from the boys and not a traditional name, but it just suited her."



**Sir Rod Stewart doesn't hear from Sir Elton John**

Sir Rod Stewart has claimed Sir Elton doesn't return his calls. The 76-year-old singer insisted earlier this year he and his old friend had patched up their differences after they fell out in 2018 when he mocked the 'Sacrifice' singer's plans for a retirement tour, branding it "not rock 'n' roll", but he's now admitted their relationship is still strained. Asked about his friend - who has sons Zachary, 10, and Elijah, eight, with husband David Furnish - on the BBC Sounds podcast 'Headliners', Rod laughed and said "who?" before exclaiming: "My old mucker". He then said: "He is my old mate. We don't speak to each other much any more. I miss

him. "I invited his sons to play on my football pitch and never got a reply. We have not spoken since. He just had a hip op so I wish him well. We still love each other." The 'Maggie May' singer - who has Sarah, 58, from a teenage relationship, Kimberly, 42, and Sean, 41, with first wife Alana, Ruby, 34, with Kelly Emberg, Renee, 29, and Liam, 27, with second wife Rachel Hunter, and Alastair, 15, and Aiden, 10, with current spouse Lady Penny Lancaster-Stewart - admitted he and Elton's only contact now is through the media. He said: "We have rows - we sort of almost speak through the press!" Rod admitted in January he made up with Elton to set a good example to his kids. He said: "I say to my kids, 'A man apologizes, go and apologize to your mother'. We've just made up as friends again, me and Elton. "We've always been fierce enemies, as you know, through the years, but it's always been at a playful level. "But we had the worst row, like a married couple. It went on forever." And the 'Sailing' singer said he "regretted" lashing out at

Elton for his farewell tour. He added: "I was a bit spiteful when he announced his tour. I regret it, I really do regret it. So we're mates again now. I do love him." His comments came after Elton, 74, said he "bears no grudges" toward Rod, as he confirmed the pair are friends again. The 'Tiny Dancer' singer said: "Rod and I have always had this kind of rivalry but it's always been very friendly and it's always been funny and I love him to death. "We've had this rivalry for a long time and it's been very, very funny, and I love him dearly, and if I saw him in the street I'd give him the biggest hug. There's no point in carrying on vendettas in this world. Life's too short. "Honestly, I don't bear any grudges about him whatsoever. He gets a Christmas card from me and I wish him the best. You can't erase all those years of great friendship by just one thing that happened, and I'm not going to do that. "As far as I'm concerned he's a brilliant artist who's had a great career, and he's such good fun."



ITALIAN CUISINE WEEK CONCLUDES



A gala reception at the residence of the Italian Ambassador Carlo Baldocci concluded the sixth edition of the Italian Cuisine Week in Kuwait on Sunday. The event opened in Kuwait TV studios on November 21, 2021, with the collaboration of "Riccardo Restaurant" of Sheraton Kuwait, the oldest Italian restaurant in Kuwait and his team, led by Executive Chef Simone Murru. Over 150 people including representatives of the diplomatic community and Kuwaiti civil societies attended the event. During the evening, a book "An Italian Food

Journey, 50 iconic dishes and products of excellence", created by the Italian embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with ItaliaSquisita, was presented and offered to guests. The book talks about chefs who wrote 50 recipes after visiting the most important locations in Italy. Ambassador Baldocci specified in this regard that this book is dedicated to those who love Italy and it is not only a recipe manual, but also a "travel companion" for those who live in Kuwait and want to visit Italy. The Italian Cuisine Week in Kuwait was also

characterized by a series of events promoting Italian food products. The Kuwaiti public is in fact increasingly attracted to Italian cuisine and products. Statistics show that retail sales of Italian food products have increased by around 25% over the past two years. Today, the Italian restaurants in Kuwait are providing more choices for take-away, and the distributors are adding new Italian products to the market, where more Kuwaitis are experimenting with Italian dishes at home. "Tradition and perspectives of Italian cuisine: awareness and enhancement of food sustainabili-

ty" was the main theme of the 2021 edition, which combines the promotion of Italian agricultural and food products with the enhancement of the Mediterranean diet as a healthy and sustainable model of nutrition and lifestyle. Also on the occasion of the Italian Cuisine Week, the Italian embassy signed first agreement for the launch of a "Food Academy" which will organize Italian cooking classes and workshops, as well as specialized seminars on nutrition and characteristics of Italian agricultural and food products.

# HORSEBACK ARCHERY: MALAYSIANS TAKE A SHOT AT ANCIENT PASTIME



This picture shows Zaharudin Rastam Yeop Mahidin marking his target during a Horseback Archery League competition at Cape Cavallo Equestrian Club in Rembau, Malaysia's Negeri Sembilan state. —AFP photos



Participants waiting for their turn during a Horseback Archery League competition.



This picture shows a participant taking part in a Horseback Archery League competition.

Riding a galloping horse under the blazing sun, Malaysian archer Zaharudin Rastam Yeop Mahidin fires an arrow at a target as a crowd cheers. This is horseback archery, which was common for thousands of years in hunting and warfare but declined with the introduction of firearms and other modern combat gear. Now it is getting a revival as a niche sport, gaining a growing following in Malaysia and among a small number of enthusiasts worldwide.

Wearing a traditional outfit associated with the country's ethnic Malay Muslim majority, Zaharudin was one of 28 riders competing at a tournament in central Rembau district. The 59-year-old veteran archer said it was the most challenging but rewarding sport he had ever tried. "It's a blending of mind, body and spirit at its best," he told AFP. "The mind has to be focused on the task at hand. The body must conform to what's needed... handling the bow and arrows on a moving horse. "And the spirit—you have to trust the horse."

Riders at the tournament had to try to hit nine targets within 30 seconds as they galloped along a 200-metre (650-foot) track, and were judged on their accuracy and speed. The tournament was established in 2018 and has been held several times since, but the recent edition was the first in nearly two years due to coronavirus curbs in Malaysia. Horseback archery requires intensive training before riders can shoot targets while moving at speed. It is also a relatively expensive sport to get into, given the cost of keeping horses and the fact there are only a few places in the country to learn it.

But it is becoming more popular in Malaysia, with about 100 people taking part, and the sport's tight-knit community hopes to entice sponsors and government support, and make it more accessible to the wider public. Its following has also grown worldwide, with tournaments held in countries from Europe to Asia in recent years. For Malaysia's Muslims, who comprise more than half of the country's 32 million people, the sport has an extra appeal as the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) encouraged both horse-riding and archery.

"People see this as an opportunity to practice the 'sunnahs' (traditions and practices of the Prophet)," said Zarina Ismail, owner of the Cape Cavallo Equestrian Club, where the tournament took place. But for many, the sport's difficulty is a major draw. "It's a challenging sport—and Malaysians like a challenge," said Syed Abdul Muiz Syed Alias, president of the As-Sibaq Malaysian Horseback Archery Association. —AFP



A doctor inspecting a horse during a Horseback Archery League competition.



Participants using a mobile phone to take a selfie ahead of a Horseback Archery League competition.



A participant waiting for his turn during a Horseback Archery League competition.



Zaharudin Rastam Yeop Mahidin holding his bow and arrow during a Horseback Archery League competition.



A participant aiming to shoot an arrow at a target with his bow during a track testing.



Participants preparing before a Horseback Archery League competition.



Participants cleaning their horses after a track testing ahead of a Horseback Archery League competition.



A volunteer wrapping bandages around the legs of a horse ahead of a Horseback Archery League competition.



A volunteer preparing a horse ahead of a Horseback Archery League competition.

Lifestyle | Features

# 'VISIONARY' FASHION DESIGNER VIRGIL ABLOH DIES AGED 41



This file photo shows US fashion designer Virgil Abloh acknowledging the audience at the end of the presentation of Louis Vuitton's creation during the men's spring/summer 2020 fashion collection in Paris.



This file photo taken on September 14, 2021 shows US designer Virgil Abloh arriving for the 2021 Met Gala at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.



This file photo taken on January 4, 2016 shows American designer Virgil Abloh acknowledging the audience at the end of Off-White during the men's Spring/Summer 2020 collection fashion show in Paris.

Top US fashion designer Virgil Abloh, the artistic director of Louis Vuitton's menswear collection, died Sunday aged 41 after battling cancer for several years, the fashion and luxury house's French owners LVMH announced. Abloh, the first black American creative director of a top French fashion house, brought streetwear such as hoodies and sneakers to the catwalk. He transcended the fashion world and his untimely death at the peak of his career sent shockwaves across the globe, with tributes pouring in from rival design houses but also actors and sportspeople for a man seen as a deeply humane visionary.

"We are all shocked by this terrible news. Virgil was not only a genius designer, a visionary, but also a man with a beautiful soul and great wisdom," LVMH chief executive Bernard Arnault said in a statement. "The LVMH family joins me in this moment of great sorrow and we are all thinking of his loved ones after the passing of their husband, their father, their brother or their friend," he added in the statement posted on LVMH's Twitter account. The group said he had been "batting privately" against cancer for several years. Abloh was chosen to be artistic director of Louis Vuitton's menswear collection in 2018. His parents had immigrated to the United States from Ghana.

LVMH also announced earlier this year it was taking a majority stake in the luxury streetwear label Off-White created by Abloh. LVMH took 60-percent stake in Off-White and Abloh retained 40 percent. Abloh has addressed both environmental and social issues in his work with Louis Vuitton, with anti-racist and anti-homophobia messages at his January show in Paris. He said earlier this year he planned to use his partnership with LVMH "to expand opportunities for diverse individuals and foster greater equity and inclusion in the industries we serve".

Kim Jones, the artistic director of menswear at French fashion house Dior said: "So sad to hear about the passing of dear Virgil, one of the kindest people you could ever meet." Rival Italian luxury fashion house Gucci hailed Abloh as an "immense inspiration to us all both as a designer and as a person. He will be deeply missed though his vision will live on through the trails that he blazed throughout his career." Gucci added on its Twitter account.

**'No one will forget impact'**

The king of luxury streetwear, Abloh had established himself within a few years as one of the most sought-after designers in the world. His trademark was a style reflecting street culture, with sneakers

and sweatshirts, but also an easily recognizable logo, made of oblique black and white bands. He enjoyed successful collaborations with the likes of Nike, Jimmy Choo and Moncler. Abloh created his first label, Pyrex Vision, in 2012. A year later, Off-White was born, a luxury streetwear brand, which won a following through its eye-catching branding before evolving towards more "couture" creations. Abloh was one of a handful of fashion designers who had a close following well beyond the industry and was a celebrity name in his own right.

Long-time friend and collaborator Kanye West dedicated his weekly gathering "Sunday Service" to Abloh, with a livestreamed choir rendition of Adele's new hit "Easy On Me". Canadian rapper Drake thanked Abloh "for everything" in an Instagram post. "Love you eternally brother," he wrote. US singer Pharrell Williams also took to Instagram with a tribute, writing: "Virgil you were a kind, generous, thoughtful creative genius your work as a human and your work as a spiritual being will live forever. "Sending love and light to your wife, children, family... you're with the Master now, shine."

On Twitter, French football star Kylian Mbappe posted: "RIP VIRGIL ABLOH. No one will forget the impact you had. God bless you my friend."



This file photo taken on June 23, 2018 shows US fashion designer for Louis Vuitton, Virgil Abloh, attending the Dior Men's Spring/Summer 2019 fashion show in Paris. —AFP photos

British actor Idris Elba also tweeted, saying, "Too soon Virgil. You will be missed from this world man." Fellow British actor Riz Ahmed added that Abloh had "stretched culture" and "changed the game", helping to "reimagine what's possible". French actor Omar Sy, famed for his role in the Netflix series Lupin, wrote simply on Twitter: "Rest in Power Virgil." —AFP

## Final Virgil Abloh show in Miami

Louis Vuitton will present the final collection by designer Virgil Abloh in Miami today, following his death from cancer at the age of 41. "In loving memory of Virgil Abloh, Louis Vuitton pays tribute to the life and legacy of a creative genius with a presentation of his Spring-Summer 2022 Collection in Miami on November 30th," the fashion house said on Twitter. The 41-year-old Abloh was Louis Vuitton's trailblazing head of menswear, the first black artistic director at a major French luxury label.

The Chicago-born designer and DJ had been privately fighting a rare form of cancer since 2019, but died on Sunday. Abloh was a pioneer of streetwear on the catwalk as a creative director for Kanye West, founder of brand Off-White, and with Louis Vuitton since 2018. The announcement of his death triggered an outpouring of grief across the fashion world. "We are all shocked by this terrible news," said Bernard Arnault, chief executive of LVMH, the group that owns Louis Vuitton. "Virgil was not only a genius designer, a visionary, but also a man with a beautiful soul and great wisdom," he added. —AFP

## McConaughey not seeking Texas governorship

Matthew McConaughey will not run for governor of Texas "at this moment", the Oscar-winning actor said Sunday, after months of speculation that he would make the leap into politics. The 52-year-old's political ambitions had caused excitement in liberal circles, and particularly among Texans appalled by Governor Greg Abbott, who signed a highly restrictive law banning most abortions. "As a simple kid born in the little town of Uvalde, Texas, it never occurred to me that I would one day be considered for political leadership," the rom-com heartthrob turned serious actor said in a video posted online. "It's a humbling and inspiring path to ponder. It is also a path that I am choosing not to take at this moment." Polls had shown McConaughey would fare better against Abbott than Beto O'Rourke, the Democratic former presidential candidate who formally entered the race earlier this month. Abbott is seeking a third term in the November 2022 election, for which nominations close on December 13. McConaughey told AFP earlier this month that a gubernatorial campaign had "been discussed. It's a possible avenue."

The "Dallas Buyers Club" and "True Detective" star had not declared allegiance to either major party. He described himself as "aggressively centrist", adding: "Not because that's the place of gray and compromise... I think today it's a daring space. It's the space of outlaws." In the Sunday video, McConaughey said that his ruminations on state and national politics had taught him that "we have some problems we need to fix; that our politics needs new purpose; that we have divides that need healing." —AFP



## Disney animation 'Encanto' enchants N American viewers

Disney's new animated musical fantasy film "Encanto" has topped the North American box office for the three-day weekend, taking in an estimated \$27 million, industry watcher Exhibitor Relations said Sunday. Its numbers fell short of previous family-oriented Thanksgiving weekend releases such as "Frozen II" and "Coco" but were still seen as a sign that family films are starting to return to health in the pandemic era. With original music by Lin-Manuel Miranda, "Encanto" tells the story of a family in the mountains of Colombia endowed with special powers—except for daughter Mirabel, who ends up having to save the others. Voice actors include Stephanie Beatriz, John Leguizamo and Diane Guerrero.

Also faring well was Sony's family-friendly "Ghostbusters: Afterlife." The latest chapter in the wacky supernatural franchise took in an estimated \$24.5 million to place second for the Friday-through-Sunday period. Directed by Jason Reitman, whose father Ivan Reitman

made the original 37 years ago, "Afterlife" stars Paul Rudd, Carrie Coon and McKenna Grace in a ghostly tale that has shape-shifted from 1980s Manhattan to today's



small-town Oklahoma. Further reflecting Hollywood's gradual recovery, Ridley Scott's new crime drama "House of Gucci" placed

third at \$14.2 million, a healthy showing for an adult-oriented film at a time when Covid fears have kept many older viewers at home. The MGM/United Artists film

stars Adam Driver as Maurizio Gucci, the onetime head of the famed Gucci fashion house, and Lady Gaga—again drawing Oscar

buzz three years after "A Star Is Born"—as Patrizia Reggiani, the vengeful ex-wife who in 1995 hired a hitman to murder Gucci outside his Milan office. The star-laden cast also includes Al Pacino, Salma Hayek, Jeremy Irons and Jared Leto. Disney/Marvel superhero film "Eternals" placed fourth, at \$7.9 million, while surpassing an accumulated \$150 million domestically. Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Richard Madden and Gemma Chan star in the story of an immortal race of aliens who emerge from hiding to save the Earth. And in fifth was Sony and Screen Gems' new "Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City." The video game adaptation took in \$5.3 million, with Kaya Scodelario and Robbie Amell starring. Rounding out the top 10 were:

- "Clifford the Big Red Dog" (\$4.9 million)
- "King Richard" (\$3.3 million)
- "Dune" (\$2.2 million)
- "No Time to Die" (\$1.8 million)
- "Venom: Let There Be Carnage" (\$1.6 million) —AFP

## 'SIMPSONS' TIANANMEN EPISODE MISSING FROM DISNEY+ IN HONG KONG

An episode of "The Simpsons" in which the cartoon American family visit Tiananmen Square is missing from the Disney+ streaming service in Hong Kong, adding to concerns about mainland China-style censorship in the city. It comes at a time when authorities are clamping down on dissent, with curbs on speech becoming a norm in the international business hub and ensnaring global media and tech giants. Disney+ has made rapid advances since it was launched 18 months ago, reaching more than 116 million worldwide subscribers.

The Hong Kong version started streaming earlier this month and eagle-eyed customers soon noticed the conspicuous absence of "The Simpsons" episode 12 of season 16. First airing in 2005, the episode features the family's trip to China in which matriarch Marge Simpson's sister tries to adopt a baby. In one scene, the Simpsons are at Beijing's Tiananmen Square, the site of a deadly 1989 crackdown against democracy protesters. The cartoon shows a sign there that reads "On this site, in 1989, nothing happened"—a satirical nod to China's campaign to purge memories of what happened.

It then shows Marge's sister standing before a tank, referencing the famous photo from the Tiananmen crackdown of a lone man standing in front of a tank. The episode also contains pointed comments about Tibet—where Beijing has been

accused of religious oppression—and the Cultural Revolution, a devastating period of upheaval in the last decade of Mao Zedong's rule. It is not clear whether Disney+ removed the episode, was ordered to by authorities or if it was offered in Hong Kong to begin with. The entertainment giant has not responded to requests for comment, nor has Hong Kong's government. When AFP checked Disney+'s Hong Kong channel on Monday episodes 11 and 13 of season 16 were available but not 12.



In this file photo a journalist stands in front of a Walt Disney's Hong Kong theme park logo prior to a press conference in Hong Kong. —AFP

Until recently, semi-autonomous Hong Kong boasted significant artistic and political freedoms compared with mainland China. But authorities are currently transforming the city in the wake of huge and often violent democracy protests two years ago. Among the slew of measures are new censorship laws introduced this summer that forbid any broadcasts that might breach a broad national security law that China imposed on the city last year. Censors have since ordered directors to make cuts and refused permission for some films to be shown to the public.

Those rules do not currently cover streaming services but authorities have warned that online platforms fall under other rules, including the new national security law. Last week, Hong Kong's Beijing-appointed leader Carrie Lam vowed to "proactively plug loopholes" in the city's internet and introduce "fake news" regulations. Her comments added to concerns that China's "Great Firewall"—a sprawling internet and news censorship regime—could be extended to Hong Kong. Content that satirizes China is still available on other streaming platforms in Hong Kong.

Netflix's Hong Kong channel is still showing "Band in China", an episode of the cartoon series "South Park". In that episode, one of the characters ends up in a Chinese labor camp and much of the show lampoons the willingness of American brands to adhere to Chinese censorship rules to make money. —AFP

## Sports

# Klopp's mentor Rangnick brings studios approach to Man Utd

## 'The Professor' brings high-tempo pressing tactics to troubled club

LONDON: Manchester United's new interim manager Ralf Rangnick once mentored Jurgen Klopp and Thomas Tuchel and now 'The Professor' will use his studios approach to revive his troubled Premier League club.

United hired Rangnick yesterday after Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was sacked last week following a humiliating 4-1 defeat at Watford that featured the kind of confusion and lethargy that are anathema to the German.

Solskjaer's failed reign was defined by an acute lack of coherent game-planning. But Rangnick's role in championing the "gegenpressing" (counter-pressing) philosophy popularized by Liverpool boss Klopp suggests United are about to be dragged into the 21st century.

United lured Rangnick from his role as Lokomotiv Moscow's head of sports and development after learning Paris Saint-Germain were not willing to part with Mauricio Pochettino at present. That could turn out to be a blessing in disguise if the 63-year-old can emulate the success enjoyed by his devoted pupils at Liverpool and Chelsea.

Klopp used Rangnick's tactics to become a Premier League and European champion at Liverpool, while Chelsea boss Tuchel is an ardent admirer after United's new manager gave him his first coaching job at Stuttgart. Rangnick rejected an interim offer from Chelsea in January, paving the way for Tuchel to win the Champions League in his first season with the Blues. Klopp and Tuchel swear by the

intense scheme Rangnick first adopted after watching Valeriy Lobanovskiy's Dynamo Kiev in the 1980s.

"That was my football epiphany. I understood that there was a different way of playing," Rangnick said. The German's obsession with his players' reaction times in training is fueled by his desire to deploy high-tempo pressing tactics during matches.

When Klopp's Borussia Dortmund suffered an eye-opening 4-1 defeat against Rangnick's Hoffenheim in 2008, he immediately learned lessons from his counterpart's style. In an interview with the

“Everything he does is very well thought-out”

Coaches' Voice website, Rangnick said: "Our idea is clear: it's very similar to my almost-coaching friend Jurgen Klopp. Our football is very heavy metal, rick and roll and it's not slow balls."

Reacting to Rangnick's appointment, Klopp said it was not good news for United's rivals. "Ralf is obviously a really experienced manager," he said.

"Unfortunately a good coach is coming to England."

### 'Trust and empathy'

It will be fascinating to see if Rangnick can persuade Cristiano Ronaldo to carry out his demands after the striker's apparent unwillingness to get his hands dirty this season. Ronaldo is not the only United star who might benefit from Rangnick's arrival, with their often shambolic defending one area his rigorous approach could clearly improve.

Rangnick was one of the first coaches to hire video analysts and sports psychologists and while he once had a no-nonsense style, he has changed with the times. "Modern-day leadership is about being persuasive and creating a motivational basis so every day the players will want to come in and get better," he said. "This is about trust and empathy and human relationships."

Lutz Pfannenstiel, who worked with Rangnick at Hoffenheim, believes his methodology is ideally suited to lifting United out of their malaise. "We like to call him in Germany, the football professor. Everything he does is very well thought-out, the way he puts structures in place at every club is something amazing," Pfannenstiel told the BBC.

A self-confessed Anglophile, Rangnick studied English and physical education at the University of Sussex in the 1970s. He also played non-league football for Southwick during that spell in England and once worked as an intern at Arsenal.

Rangnick built his coaching resume in Germany



Ralf Rangnick

with spells at Stuttgart, Hannover, Hoffenheim, Schalke and RB Leipzig, where he was last in the dug-out in 2019. Rangnick has only won one major trophy, the 2011 German Cup with Schalke. But he did take Schalke to the Champions League semi-finals in 2011, losing to Alex Ferguson's United, and led Hoffenheim to the Bundesliga with successive promotions. After his six-month interim regime, Rangnick has agreed to take on a consultancy role at Old Trafford for two further years. By the time he steps away, United hope Rangnick's lessons will have raised the bar at a club that have fallen a long way since their glory days under Ferguson. —AFP

### News in brief

#### Omicron hits Portuguese club?

LISBON: The 13 reported cases of COVID-19 at the Portuguese football club Belenenses, whose league match against Benfica was called off at the weekend when their team was reduced to just six players, appear to be the Omicron variant, Portugal's national health institute (INSA) announced yesterday. If confirmed, the cases would be the first in Portugal of the new coronavirus strain. INSA added that one of Belenenses players had recently travelled in South Africa, where the Omicron variant was first identified.

#### Hertha Berlin sack Dardai

BERLIN: Hertha Berlin, currently sitting 14th in the Bundesliga, sacked Pal Dardai as coach yesterday, replacing the Hungarian with former Turkey international Tayfun Korkut. Hertha's 1-1 home draw against Augsburg on Saturday saw the team stretch to four their winless streak, which included a 2-0 capital derby defeat by Union. Dardai, 45, rejoined Hertha in January this year after having been sacked a first time in 2019. German-born ex-midfielder Korkut, 47, signed a contract until the end of the season, not having graced the dug-out in the three years since he was dismissed as coach of Stuttgart.

#### Kuwait wins more medals

TUNIS: Kuwait's Hussein Al-Tamimi won silver medal at the shot put competition with an 18.5m score at the 8th Arab junior athletics championship, hosted in Rades, southeast Tunisia. Moreover, countryman Nawaf Hamasha snatched bronze of the 200m hurdle. Also, Kuwait's athletic team grabbed the bronze medal of the relay race, taking Kuwait's overall count to five medals. The championship which concluded on Sunday brought together 391 athletes from 15 Arab countries.

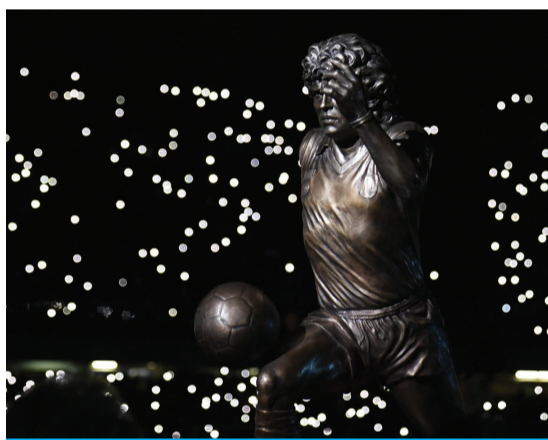
#### Kuwait ready for Paralympic tourney

KUWAIT: Kuwait Athletics and Table Tennis Paralympic teams left for Bahrain to participate in the Asian Youth Paralympic Games from 27-11 until 8-12. Head of Kuwait delegation Bader Al-Dousary said Kuwait's players are fully ready to take part in the athletics and table tennis competitions, adding "we are seeking the best results in a championship that is considered the largest and most important at the Asian continent's level."

## Napoli honor Maradona by crushing Lazio

MILAN: Dazzling Napoli paid the perfect tribute to Diego Maradona on Sunday by thumping Lazio 4-0 to move three points clear at the top of Serie A. FIFA president Gianni Infantino was among those present in Naples as the southern Italian city honored one of its adopted sons, who led Napoli to their only two league titles and the 1989 UEFA Cup and died a year ago on Thursday.

Fans chanted Maradona's name as a statue, which depicts their idol in full flight atop the number 10, was carried around the pitch. A tribute from Pele was shown on the stadium's big screens, while players came out for their pre-match warm-up to the sound of "Life Is Life" by Opus, the song to which Maradona does keepee-uppies in one of the most beloved pieces of footage of the Argentine in his pomp. Inspired by the emotional ceremony, Napoli took full advantage of AC Milan crashing to a 3-1 home defeat against Sassuolo to go it alone at the



NAPLES: A bronze statue depicting Argentinian football legend Diego Armando Maradona is displayed on the pitch ahead of the Italian Serie A football match between Napoli and Lazio Rome at Diego-Armando-Maradona stadium in Naples on Sunday. — AFP

summit with an at times electrifying performance. "We put in one of our best performances, now the important thing is to always play like that,

## Vinicius stunner seals late Real Madrid victory

MADRID: Vinicius Junior scored a scintillating 87th-minute winner as Real Madrid came from behind to defeat Sevilla 2-1 and move four points clear at the top of La Liga on Sunday. The 21-year-old Vinicius has been a revelation this season and proved the difference again at the Santiago Bernabeu, where he went off to a standing ovation after securing Madrid their sixth consecutive victory. "He's extraordinary," said Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti. "He's a player with something special in his feet."

His goal, a stunning strike into the top corner after a surging run in off the left, ensured Sevilla took nothing from a game they had dominated for most of the first half. Rafa Mir headed them in front early on but the game turned on an error from goalkeeper Bono, who gifted Karim Benzema his

19th goal of the season, the night before the 33-year-old hopes to win the Ballon d'Or.

Victory sends Madrid four points clear of Real Sociedad, who they face at Anoeta next weekend, while Sevilla stay fourth, now five points off the top. "Maybe a draw would have been a fairer result, but I don't think we deserved to lose," said Ancelotti. Real Sociedad lost ground after slipping to a surprise 1-0 defeat by Espanyol before Atletico Madrid bounced back from their Champions League loss to AC Milan in midweek with a thumping 4-1 win away at Cadiz.

### Ready-made replacement

Vinicius now has 11 goals in 24 appearances this term and while he was never a guaranteed starter under Zinedine Zidane, the Brazilian has exploded into life under Carlo Ancelotti. This was the kind of decisive moment Madrid hoped they would be getting from Eden Hazard but with the Belgian still lacking both form and fitness, it seems they now have a ready-made replacement.

"I knew about his individual quali-



MADRID: Real Madrid's Brazilian forward Vinicius Junior (center) is congratulated by teammates after scoring a goal during the Spanish league football match against Sevilla at the Santiago Bernabeu stadium in Madrid on Sunday. —AFP

ties, his dribbling, in one against ones, his speed, in all that he's very strong," said Ancelotti. "But what surprises everyone now is that ability to score goals, which he didn't have before."

Madrid were sluggish and sloppy for most of the first half an hour, lived up only by Benzema's goal that was gifted to him after Bono's mistake.

Sevilla took the lead in the 12th minute when Mir was allowed acres of space to plant a header past Thibaut Courtois. They should have been two ahead as David Alaba cleared off the line from Mir, who then forced an excellent save from Courtois after a lethargic touch from Toni Kroos gave him a second chance. —AFP

## Toyota seals victory in FIA WRC manufacturers' championship

MONZA: The GAZOO Racing (GR) World Rally Team achieved a magnificent championship treble recently at the iconic Monza circuit. The team clinched the manufacturers' title with a one-two finish during the final round as Sebastien Ogier and Julien Ingrassia claimed their eighth driver and co-driver crowns in style with victory in the No 1 Toyota Yaris WRC.

Ogier and Ingrassia went up against their teammates Elfyn Evans and Scott Martin in the No 33 Toyota Yaris WRC during an exciting final-round showdown at Rally Monza. The two crews engaged in an epic battle throughout the race, swapping the lead between them six times. They entered the third and final day separated by just half a second, before setting identical times on the morning's opening test. Ogier and Ingrassia took the lead during the penultimate stage in the No 1 Toyota Yaris WRC

and went on to secure victory ahead of Evans and Martin, who finished in second place in the No 33 Toyota Yaris WRC.

The win was the fifth of the season for Ogier and Ingrassia after victories in Monte Carlo, Croatia, Sardinia and Kenya. Evans and Martin secured the fifth Toyota one-two of the season, and finished as runners-up in the championship for the second year in a row after claiming victories in Portugal and Finland.

This is the fifth time Toyota has won the manufacturers' championship - putting it joint third on the all-time list of titles - and the second since it returned to the sport in 2017 with the Yaris WRC. The win also marked the 26th and last victory achieved by the car in the final event of the World Rally Car era before hybrid electric-powered Rally cars are introduced in 2022.

Akio Toyoda, President, Toyota Motor Corporation, commented: "Seb and Julien, congratulations! I truly respect you for driving to the maximum until the end. To be eight-time champions is a great record, and we are all proud that two out of those eight were with Toyota. Thank you so much. To secure the manufacturers' title and have Seb and Elfyn freely fight at the same time, all team members tackled this final event together to achieve both."

Toyoda added: "This team kept making the Yaris WRC stronger since 2017, and made the



last Yaris WRC the strongest ever. I'm really happy for that. We will prepare an ever-stronger Yaris and make our fans even more excited from next season onward. I hope the fans will look forward to our new car and new challenges and I appreciate your continuous support for GR World Rally Team."

Over the years, Toyota has been participating in many different forms of motorsports, including Formula One, the World Endurance Championship (WEC), and the Nurburgring 24 Hours endurance race. Toyota's participation in these events was

overseen by separate entities within the company until April 2015, when Toyota established GR, to consolidate all of its motorsports activities under one in-house brand. Representing Toyota's belief that 'the roads build the people, and the people build the cars,' GR highlights the role of motorsports as a fundamental pillar of Toyota's commitment to making 'ever-better' cars. Harnessing years of experience gained under the extreme conditions of various motorsports events, GR aims to forge new technologies and solutions that bring the freedom, adventure, and joy of driving to everyone.

Sports

# FIFA Arab Cup kicks off in Qatar today

## Eyes on tournament as Qatar prepares for 2022 FIFA World Cup



The FIFA Arab Cup trophy.

DOHA: Qatar host the FIFA Arab Cup starting today; an event seen as a precursor for the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup. The tournament, which runs through December 18, gathers 16 national teams representing Arab countries and is held under FIFA's banner. Six stadiums will be used as venues for upcoming matches of the event.

Head of the national and regional public relations



The Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium. — KUNA photos



### FIFA to test offside VAR

at Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy Youssef Al-Hammadi affirmed that Qatar had prepared diligently for the upcoming tournament, laying detailed plans to receive fans at Hamad interna-

tional airport, provide accommodation, as well as transport said fans to and from as well as between stadiums. Those attending the tournament will be the first to benefit from the transportation infrastructure laid for the upcoming international championships including the World Cup, he affirmed.

Regarding safety precautions, Hammadi said that all measures were in place to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO), adding that rapid coronavirus tests would be provided for fans under 12 before entering matches. Each stadium hosting the tournament gathers around 40,000 to 60,000

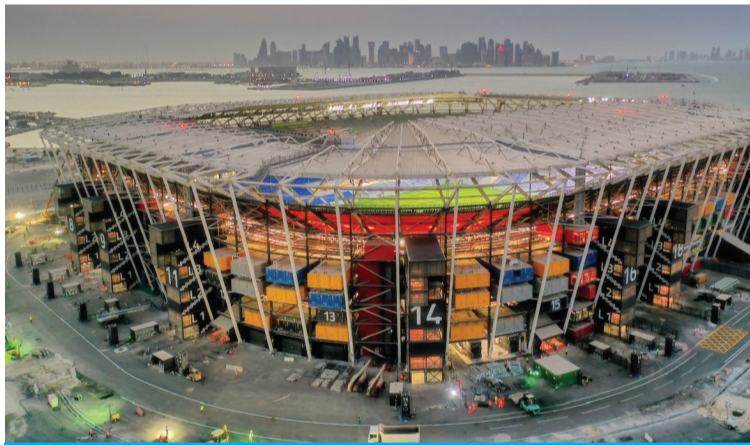
spectators, indicated the officials, saying that the facilities were built using topnotch architectural designed and materials. The opening match of the tournament will pit Qatar against Bahrain on November 30 in the first group followed by Iraq versus Oman.

#### Offside VAR

FIFA also plans to use the tournament to try out a semi-automatic detection of offside in football using specialized cameras and a dedicated offside video assistant. If the results are positive, the system may then be used at the 2022 World Cup finals

in Qatar. A camera system would be set up on the roof of each stadium and information relayed to a video assistant who can then alert the referee.

"Limb tracking data extracted from the video will be sent to the operations rooms and the calculated offside line and detected kick-point is provided," Johannes Holzmüller, FIFA director of football technology and innovation, said yesterday. "The replay operator then has the opportunity to show it immediately to the VAR," added Holzmüller. "At the FIFA Arab Cup the assistant VAR at a dedicated offside station can immediately validate and confirm the information." — Agencies



DOHA: The 974 Stadium in Doha, Qatar.



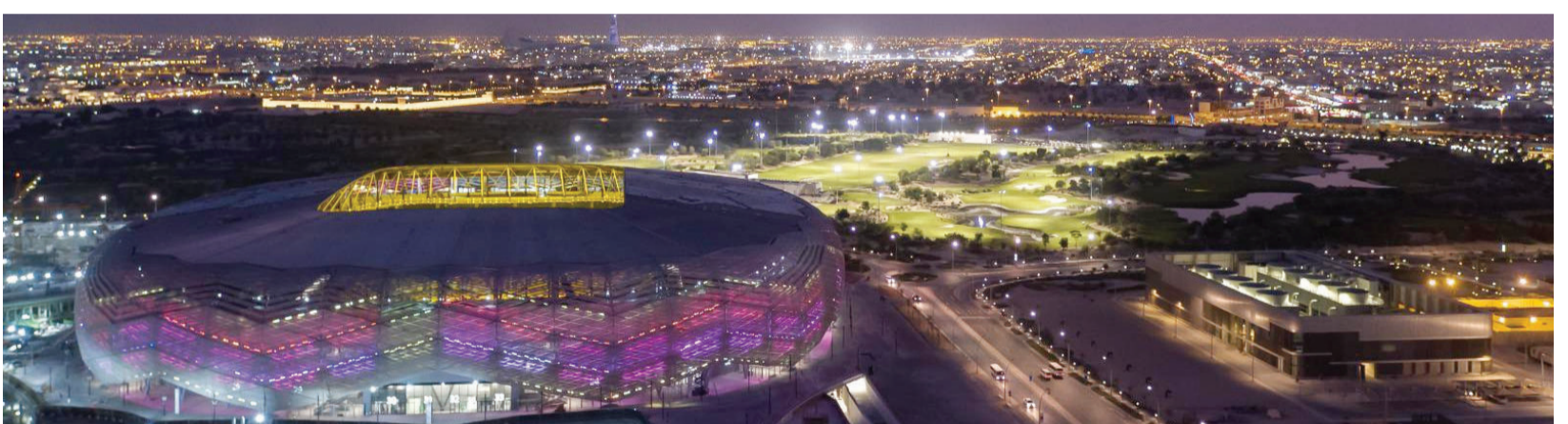
The Arabian desert house (Al-Bayt) Stadium.



Al-Thumama Stadium.



Al-Janoub Stadium.



The Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium.

# Classifieds

## Hospitals & Clinics

Sabah Hospital	24812000
Amiri Hospital	22450005
Maternity Hospital	24843100
Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital	25312700
Chest Hospital	24849400
Farwaniya Hospital	24892010
Adan Hospital	23940620
Ibn Sina Hospital	24840300
Al-Razi Hospital	24846000
Physiotherapy Hospital	24874330/9

### Clinics

Kaizen center	25716707
Rawda	22517733
Adaliya	22517144

Khaldiya	24848075
Kaifan	24849807
Shamiya	24848913
Shuwaikh	24814507
Abdullah Salem	22549134
Nuzha	22526804
Industrial Shuwaikh	24814764
Qadsiya	22515088
Dasmah	22532265
Bneid Al-Gar	22531908
Shaab	22518752
Qibla	22459381
Ayoun Al-Qibla	22451082
Mirqab	22456536
Sharq	22465401
Salmiya	25746401

## SHARING ACCOMMODATION

For Filipino Bachelor ONLY Farwaniya block 1, near Oncost and India gate. Available from November 26, 2021. Contact 94418396 or 97345734. 30-11-2021

## CHANGE OF NAME

I, MOHAMED FAHEEMUDDIN SHAJAUDDIN, change my name as FAHEEMUDDIN SHAJAUDDIN SHAIKH. (C 0971) 30-11-2021

For labor-related inquiries and complaints:  
Call MSALHOTLINE 128

**EMERGENCY**  
112

**STAY CONNECTED**

- Read Kuwait Times now on your phone for **FREE**
- Send Subscribe to **+965 944 88888**
- Enjoy the first daily paper in Kuwait on your phone

P.O. Box 1301 Safat, 13014 Kuwait  
Tel: 24833199 - 24833358 - 24835616/7 | Fax: 24835620 - 24835621  
E: info@kuwaittimes.net





INDIANAPOLIS: Leonard Fournette #7 of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers carries the ball down the field as Bobby Okereke #58 of the Indianapolis Colts defends in the fourth quarter of the game at Lucas Oil Stadium on Sunday in Indianapolis, Indiana.— AFP

## Fournette's four TDs lead Bucs past Colts, Bengals pound Steelers

LOS ANGELES: Tom Brady completed 25 of 34 passes for 226 yards and running back Leonard Fournette scored four touchdowns as the first-place Tampa Bay Buccaneers defeated the Indianapolis Colts 38-31 on Sunday. Fournette's fourth touchdown came off a 28-yard run with just 20 seconds left in front of a crowd of 63,000 at Lucas Oil Stadium.

Fournette busted loose for the long run and the touchdown while running left in an attempt to get within field-goal range for kicker Ryan Succop. He fell into the endzone after avoiding a couple of arm tackles by Colt defenders. "It was great capping off the game like that with a punch," Fournette said. "It got scary at the end, but it's a team sport. We came together and made it happen."

Fournette finished with 100 yards rushing on 17 carries for the Buccaneers, who are in first place in the NFC South with an 8-3 record. Tampa receiver Rob Gronkowski caught seven passes for 123 yards. While the Bucs typically rely on Brady's throwing

arm with an occasional running play thrown in, the Colts like to rush the ball to set up passing opportunities and field goals.

Jonathan Taylor, who leads the NFL in rushing, gained 83 yards on 16 carries in the loss. The 22-year-old tied the game at 31-31 with a four-yard run at the 3:29 mark. The difference was turnovers — the mistake-prone Colts had five and Brady took advantage of them.

Indianapolis had a final opportunity to get into overtime after Isaiah Rodgers returned a kickoff 72 yards to Tampa Bay's 32-yard line. But quarterback Carson Wentz's pass on the final play was intercepted by Pierre Desir at the two yard line to end the contest.

Wentz completed 27 of 44 passes for 306 yards

and three touchdowns. But he also threw a pair of interceptions and lost a fumble early in the third quarter as the Colts dropped to 6-6 to remain two games behind Tennessee in the AFC South. "It is frustrating," Wentz said. "I don't know how many times we can turn the ball over against a good team like that, that many times, and still score that many points. It's not going to happen."

### Niners hold off Vikings; Ravens edge Browns

#### Prime time

Elsewhere, Joe Mixon rushed for a career-high 165 yards as the Cincinnati Bengals clobbered the Pittsburgh Steelers 41-10 in Cincinnati. Mixon delivered a couple of one-yard touchdowns as the Bengals improved to 7-4 on the season. He has scored a touchdown in eight consecutive games.

Mixon was coming off a 123-yard, two-touchdown game in a win over Las Vegas last week. Against the Steelers he scored 117 yards in just the first half. "To be honest, I feel like I'm starting to reach that point, my prime, like starting to get there," said Mixon.

Cincinnati also swept the season series from the Steelers for the first time since 2009. The Bengals have now beaten Pittsburgh in three straight games. Quarterback Joe Burrow completed 20 of 24 passes for 190 yards with a touchdown.

In Santa Clara, California, Deebo Samuel rushed for two touchdowns and Elijah Mitchell ran for 133 yards and a touchdown as the San Francisco 49ers held on for a 34-26 win over the Minnesota Vikings. In the late game, Lamar Jackson overcame a career-high four interceptions by throwing for 165 yards and rushing for another 68 yards as the Baltimore Ravens edged the Cleveland Browns 16-10. The Ravens improved to 8-3 on the season to take over top spot in the AFC standings. — AFP

## Curry propels Warriors to win over Clippers

LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry came alive late as the Golden State Warriors shook off a sloppy start to beat the Los Angeles Clippers 105-90 and post their seventh straight NBA victory. With both teams turning the ball over and missing shots it was close at halftime, the Warriors leading 44-42 on the Clippers' home floor.

Golden State extended that lead with an 11-2 scoring burst to open the third quarter, and never trailed in the second half, posting their 42nd straight game with at least 100 points scored. It looked like that streak might end, but Curry scored 13 points in the final frame as the Warriors pushed the lead to as many as 21 points after seeing it dwindle to just two late in the third period.

Jordan Poole scored 17 points, including three in less than two minutes late in the third as the Warriors withstood a 30-point performance from Los Angeles star Paul George. Curry, incensed at not getting a foul call as he drove for a layup with 9:11 left in the fourth, received a technical foul for yelling at a referee. The moment appeared to galvanize the Warriors superstar, who finished by shooting 53.8 percent from the field while handing out six assists and pulling down five rebounds.

"It was kind of a B.S. T (technical foul)," Curry said, adding: "You have those moments and decisions of where you're going to put your energy at, and obviously I thought I got fouled so I wanted to

let the emotions out and then you let it go and then you just play basketball. For me individually and for our team, I think we fueled off of that and just worried about putting the ball in the basket and that's when the avalanche started."

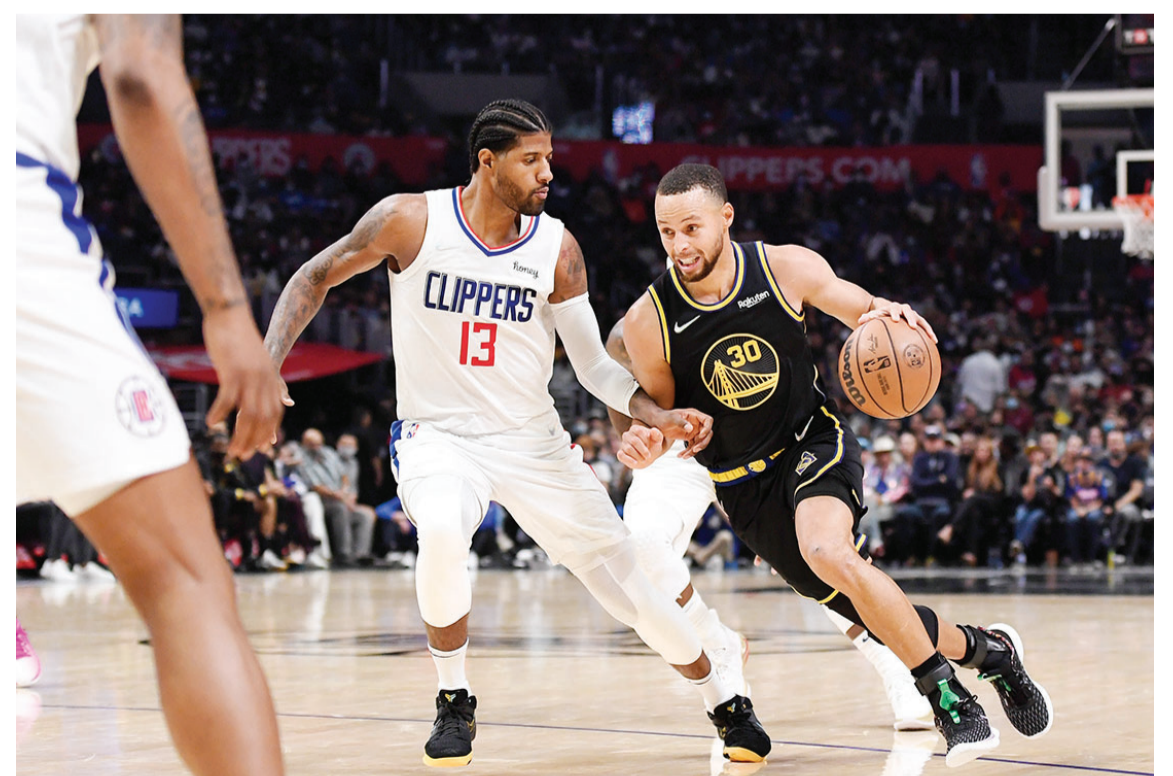
Curry also came up with six of the Warriors' 19 steals as 24 turnovers proved costly to the Clippers. "That was as upset as I've seen him and that I have been in a long time. He clearly got fouled," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "When he knows he got fouled on a play like that and he doesn't get the call the competitor will come out in him and he will lose his mind a little bit. But it will spur him like it did in this instance."

By the time Curry checked out of the game plenty of fans in the Staples Center crowd were cheering him. Curry's 28.6 points per game lead the league this season, and with seven three-pointers on the day he has reached 100 three-pointers with just 19 games under his belt in the campaign.

#### Marquee matchup

The Warriors, whose 18-2 record leads the league, face a marquee matchup tonight against Western Conference challengers Phoenix, who have won 16 straight on the way to a 17-3 record. Elsewhere, Giannis Antetokounmpo had a double-double of 26 points and 13 rebounds and Jrue Holiday scored 23 as the Milwaukee Bucks won their seventh straight game with a 118-100 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

A half dozen Bucks players finished in double figures including Khris Middleton, who tallied 14 points, five assists and five rebounds. Bobby Portis scored 15 points, while Pat Connaughton and George Hill came off the bench for 14 and 13 points, respectively in the win. The Bucks used a



LOS ANGELES: Stephen Curry #30 of the Golden State Warriors drives against Paul George #13 of the Los Angeles Clippers during the second half at Staples Center on Sunday in Los Angeles, California. — AFP

15-4 scoring burst to outscore the Pacers 39-27 in the third quarter. They pulled away from there, compiling a 22-point lead at one stage in the fourth quarter.

In Toronto, Marcus Smart scored eight of his 21

points in the fourth and added eight rebounds and six assists as the Boston Celtics defeated the Toronto Raptors 109-97. Al Horford added 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Celtics, who ended a two-game losing streak. — AFP